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MISSION FOCUS

A Survey of American Mennonite Ministries to African Independent Churches

DAVID A. SHANK

After twenty-five years of ministry to African independent churches, American Mennonites do well to review their involvement, tracing developments and present commitments. This ministry began through the modern medium of radio. A small group of churches in southeastern Nigeria heard the international broadcast of *The Mennonite Hour* and decided unilaterally to affiliate with the Mennonites, called themselves Mennonites, and wrote asking for missionary help from North American Mennonites to their brethren in Africa. At the time, the U.S. Mennonites knew practically nothing about African independent—or indigenous—churches (AICs).

But they were not alone in their ignorance. The two Westerners who—more than any others—have studied these churches as a religious phenomenon scarcely knew of them at the time. Dr. Harold Turner had his first contacts with the Church of the Lord Aladura in Sierra Leone in 1957, and Dr. David Barrett began his own interest in that same year when a major split occurred in the Luo Anglican Church in Kenya, where he was a missionary. At the time, both thought that they were dealing with a unique, local, and exceptional reality. The Mennonites thought no differently in 1958 when they received the appeal from Nigeria.

Yet such churches were to be found in many different situations and with a large diversity of forms. By 1967 scholars recognized a continent-wide phenomenon with a century-old history involving 5,000 distinct groups in 34 African nations with seven million adherents in 295 tribes in all parts of Africa. As this was being discovered, American Mennonites through their missionary representatives were to be deeply involved in the "discovery," and they became pioneers in a mission of relating actively to some of these churches.

This article seeks only to retrace the steps in that pioneering development and indicate the nature of present involvement.

Historical résumé

1. The secretary of Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), J. D. Graber, requested Gold Coast missionary S. Jay Hostetler to look into the 1958 request coming from Uyo, Nigeria. By March 1959 Hostetler had traveled to the area four times and had officially received into the Mennonite Church seventeen congregations with a total of some 500 members. But he also discovered that the Missouri Synod Lutherans, the Church of the Nazarene (U.S.), the Church of Christ, and the Mormons had also become involved in Uyo before the Mennonites had arrived.

2. The arrival in 1960 of resident missionaries Edwin and Irene Weaver led to the development of a pattern of work with the multifarious AICs around Uyo and with the congregations calling themselves Mennonite. Since leaders soon saw that Uyo did not really need another new denomination, a Bible training center was created and Weavers developed a pattern of Bible study. They worked for unity among these divergent grass-roots congregations and bridge-building between them and the older mainline mission-planted churches from which many of the AIC leaders had been excluded for reasons of discipline. Weavers involved numerous expatriate Mennonite workers in the Bible teaching activities and in medical and educational work reaching out well beyond the "independents." This established Mennonite "good faith" within the general Christian scene in the region.

Spurred by Mennonite involvement, the Eastern Region Committee of the Christian Council in 1966 sponsored an investigation in an attempt to understand better the dynamics of this local phenomenon; indeed, in the Abak area within a five-mile radius were 251 congregations of some fifty denominations.

MBM workers involved particularly with the "Mennonite" congregations included Darrel and Marian Hostetler, Cecil and Judy Miller, Lloyd and Emma Fisher, J. Stanley and Delores Friesen, and Robert Stauffer; all were ultimately withdrawn as a result of the Biafran war. But MBM has continued relationships with the local Mennonite church conference which itself has become a member of the Mennonite World Conference.

3. In 1967 Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Peace Section sent Clarence Hiebert to the Congo on a fraternal visit to the Church of Jesus Christ on the Earth led by the Prophet Simon Kimbangu in order to explore possible patterns of rela-

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tionships. Already in 1963, MCC Director in the Congo Elmer Neufeld had presented a paper on the Kimbanguists in a conference at Uyo, Nigeria. A year later, James Bertsche of the Congo Inland Mission was studying the Kimbanguist church. In 1966 David and Wilma Shank's contacts with Kimbanguist leaders in Brussels, Belgium, encouraged MCC to make official contacts. The head of the church, Joseph Diangienda, stated at the time that it was the first time he had been invited to dine with officials from a Western church.

As a result of these contacts, both Eirene and MCC began sending workers to help the Kimbanguist Church in schools and agricultural work. Independently, considerable field research on the socioreligious dynamics of Kimbanguism was carried on by the Mennonite anthropologist John Janzen. David Shank represented both Eirene and MCC at the 50th anniversary celebration at N'kamba in April 1971.

Despite their goodwill, MCC administrators concluded the MCC involvement a couple years later, having discovered the difficulties of volunteer workers integrating into the local grassroots programs of an indigenous movement then in its earliest years of public and formal organization.

4. In 1968 Paul M. Miller of Goshen (Indiana) Biblical Seminary wrote of his interviews with 23 leaders of Kenyan independent churches during 1967 as part of a broader study of the ministries within the African churches.

5. In 1969 Edwin and Irene Weaver made an extensive study trip for MBM to other West African countries, including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, and Ghana. This resulted in their setting up residence in Accra in order to relate specifically to Ghanaian AICs.

6. The B. Charles and Grace Hostetter family arrived in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1970 to assist in the work of the seminary of the Church of the Lord Aladura, which had made overtures to Mennonites as early as 1964. In reality, Hostetters were obliged to create the seminary since in fact it did not yet exist! They saw it through its birth, growing pains, and establishment, and left it in the hands of local leadership after six years. Most of those years saw Hostetters working and living on the head compound of the church and under the supervision of the primate of the church whose patterns of work, ministry, and administration were so completely different from those of Western Mennonite Christians.

Since their departure in 1976 Hostetters have been called back for short refresher courses for former students and present leaders within the churches of this originally Yoruba denomination. The original hope was that such a school would have been able to reach students from outside this one Aladura denomination, but this hope was not fulfilled during Hostetters' stay.

7. In 1971 in Ghana, Edwin and Irene Weaver helped to initiate and set up the Good News Training Institute, a Bible training center for a variety of different AICs rather than for one denomination as in Lagos. They involved MBM workers Erma Grove, Willard and Alice Roth, and J. Stanley and Delores Friesen, the latter having been excluded from Nigeria in the aftermath of the Biafran war. Set up originally as a two-year trial, the institute in 1973 embarked on a ten-year program which was to involve the American Lutherans who also sent teachers during that time.

By 1980 the institute graduated twenty-eight students from its two-year curriculum. Thirty-two different AICs had sent students to the institute by 1981. The institute also sponsored seminars, interchurch conversation, retreat days, and by 1980 was beginning to work with theological education by extension (TEE). The institute is administered by a Board of Governors created by an association of sponsoring (AIC) churches. Erma Grove was active as professor and curriculum director until 1983; her work as secretary had already been taken over by a Ghanaian in 1980. In addition to work related to the institute, Roths, Friesens, and Erma Grove all related extensivley to Ghanaian AICs during their respective terms of ministry.

8. Marlin Miller, with MBM in Paris, France, traveled in 1969 with Edwin Weaver to French-speaking countries of West Africa: Dahomey, Togo, and Ivory Coast. In 1970 the two men had a significant Bible seminar for Dahomean AIC leaders in Porto Novo. Miller repeated the same style seminar the following year. But his 1971 trip also led to important contacts with leaders of the Harrist Church in Ivory Coast whom he had met on one of two trips in 1970. During the early 1970s Edwin Weaver, John H. Yoder, and Marlin Miller were thinking about Mennonite understandings and their meaning for relating to African independent churches.

9. Elsewhere in 1970, Don Jacobs of Eastern Mennonite

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Board of Missions and Charities (EMBMC), who knew the AIC context in Kenya, and James Bertsche of the Congo Inland Mission made an extensive study of the situation in Southern Africa and its implications for Mennonite ministries. Their report was prepared for the Council of Mission Board Secretaries, Mennonite Central Committee, the Africa Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Fellowship, and the International Mennonite Organization (for Europe). This report recognized the needs among the AICs, particularly in Swaziland and South Africa, and suggested that Mennonite ministries be undertaken, inspired by the work of Weavers and Friesens in Nigeria.

10. In 1972 Wilbert Shenk, MBM overseas secretary, and Willard Roth followed through on Marlin Miller's visits to the Harrists and agreed to cooperate with the latter by responding to their requests for teachers for a projected secondary school. Miller with David and Wilma Shank followed through on these contacts in 1973, and by 1974 Shanks had assumed the responsibility for their continuity.

11. Edwin and Irene Weaver in 1973 made a four-month exploratory trip to Southern Africa for the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM—former Congo Inland Mission) to discover precise opportunities for ministries to AICs in Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Transkei. James Juhnke, MCC Director in Botswana, had first become acquainted with AICs in 1972 and encouraged work there. This trip by Weavers was conclusive for AIMM's first commitment of missionaries to a work outside of Zaire.

12. Weavers spent two years (1975-77) under the AIMM helping to initiate new ministries in Southern Africa. They worked especially with the Spiritual Healing Church of Gaborone, Botswana, while Harry and Lois Dyck patterned their work in Francistown along the lines of TEE among a cluster of AICs in the area. In 1976 the Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions and Services committed Irvin and Lydia Friesen to the Botswana program at Selibe Pikwe; from 1980-81 they sent John and Ruth Kliewer under the AIMM, working also with AICs in Gaborone. From 1978-82 MCC worker Luke Meyer worked in water development and Bible teaching, and MCC worker Lucille Teichert carried on literacy and sewing classes at Pitseng with the "Unity Church" and the "Nazareth Church."

13. Meanwhile, in 1975 Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities sent Harold and Christine Wenger to provide TEE-type Bible ministry among AICs in Swaziland. As a method TEE was not successful, but a pattern of long weekend conferences did develop. From 1979-81 Wengers worked more specifically with the National Council of Churches in Swaziland, while continuing relationships with AICs. Jim and Donna Shank arrived under EMBMC in 1978 to work with the Gilgal Zionist churches.

14. MBM appointed James and Jeanette Krabill in 1976 to work in Ivory Coast in West Africa in response to the Harrist Church's request for teachers. Krabills spent two years of French and related studies in Paris. At that same time David and Wilma Shank were also appointed for work in Ivory Coast and went to the University of Aberdeen in Scotland for preparatory studies.

15. By 1977 Stan and Lorri Nussbaum were sent by AIMM to Maseru, Lesotho, to take up a work of village-based Bible teaching among illiterate leaders of AICs. This was in response to a call from Rev. Sam Mohono of the Federal Council of African Spiritual Churches. Stan did considerable study of the way in which the Lesotho AICs use the Old Testament and relate it to their own cultural background. He has since completed a doctorate in these studies. Nussbaums were followed by Jim and Vicki Egli (1980-83), who worked also at village teaching and the development of the "weekend conference" approach. John and Tina Bohn were sent to work in Tabola in 1981 for work in rural development among AICs.

16. James and Jeanette Krabill (1978) and David and Wilma Shank (1979) began their work of relating to the Harrists as residents in Ivory Coast. However, the Harrists did not follow through on their project for a secondary school. Shanks were able to share considerably what they had learned from their research on the Prophet Harris, and Krabills developed a ministry of several months with the local chapter of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church from Nigeria. Harrists from among the Dida tribe 200 kilometers west of Abidjan asked for a Bible study program which Krabills, who moved into a major village in the area, Yocoboué, began in earnest in 1981-82.

17. In July 1979 Edwin and Irene Weaver made an important visit to Mennonite workers among AICs in Southern Africa, stopping en route at Abidjan at an MBM, MCC, AIMM retreat for workers in West Africa.

18. In 1979 Darrel and Sherill Hostetter were sent by MBM to teach and provide nursing skills within the framework of the Mennonite Church of Nigeria, which had grown out of the work among AICs (see 2 above). After a year's ministry they were withdrawn because of awkward local administration and relationships.

19. An important consultation of AIMM, MCC, and EMBMC workers among AICs was held in Gaborone, Botswana, in 1981 along with local leaders of independent churches. A defined policy and stance of AIMM was one of the fruits of this significant encounter, where Western workers and African leaders told each other what they thought they had to share with each other.

20. In February 1982 David and Wilma Shank participated in a study-consultation with Christian Reformed missionaries working among the Bassa people in Liberia. In 1983 they studied the remarkable relationship of the Canadian Baptists with two African churches in Kenya.

21. MCCer Tim Lind's work with the Transkei Council of Churches from 1978-81 led to numerous contacts with AICs with the result that Larry Hills was sent by AIMM to Transkei in 1982. James Egli and Stan Nussbaum had already effectively begun the "weekend conference" approach to ministry among AICs, under the sponsorship of the Bible Teaching Sub-Committee of the Transkei Council of Churches.

22. In 1983 a further consultation in Gaborone with AIMM workers among AICs pulled together a number of important learnings and conclusions for work in the general area of Southern Africa.

23. In December 1983 and November 1984 David and Wilma Shank were in Benin (formerly Dahomey; see 7 above) for one-week Bible seminars at Cotonou, sponsored by the Interconfessional Protestant Council of Churches especially for the head leaders of churches. Seventeen churches—many of them AICs—participated. The council is now requesting development involvement from MBM as well as help in church leadership training.

Throughout this development of a quarter of a century, one cannot help observing the way in which the experiences and leadership of Edwin and Irene Weaver predominate. From Eastern Nigeria to Lagos to the rest of West Africa to Southern Africa, their presence and vision can be discerned. Such a development is a tribute to a couple who had started their retirement because of health reasons, yet who found a completely new and pioneering ministry which has challenged a younger generation of Mennonites and provided guidance for others involved in ministry with AICs.

The nature of the involvement

If in Eastern Nigeria a Mennonite Church came to birth among the grass-roots AICs, this was not of Mennonite choosing. Indeed, elsewhere, as in Ivory Coast, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Transkei, Mennonites are committed not to create Mennonite churches. At the same time, they have always made it clear that their teaching ministry was being done from within the context of their own identity—a simple question of honesty.

The grass-roots ecumenical ministry of working for unity around Christ through the Scriptures continues to be a major Mennonite thrust among the many movements. But each situation is different, and the local needs and context have defined the methods, approaches, and patterns of ministry. The important dimension in each case is that of working in the context of the local churches, with the local church leadership, under their own structures as this is possible. This has required, of course, the kind of missionaries who are ready to adapt with much flexibility to the specific needs and perceptions of those among whom they minister.

From the beginning of their contacts in the Uyo area, Mennonite workers were aware of the fact that the nature of their ministry to AICs called for a new stance and a new approach. Here the expatriate missionary was not to be in control of the situation but was rather inserted into a form of developing, thoroughly contextualized Christianity. To discover and learn that stance meant taking risks in relationship with the expatriate missionaries and with the churches they had planted, who were not always ready to recognize God's work in the midst of the AICs.

We should not overlook the fact that during these developments numerous AIC leaders from West and Southern Africa have visited Mennonite churches and institutions in North America. These include Primate Adejobi of the Church of the Lord Aladura (who since Vancouver 1983 has become one of the Vice-Presidents of the World Council of Churches, after having presided over the Organization of African Independent Churches—OAIC (Nairobi)); Lucien Luntadila, General Secretary of the Kimbanguist Church; Prophet Mills of the Board of Governors of the Good News Training Institute in Accra, Ghana; Rev. Sam Mohono and his wife, Emily, from Lesotho (he has since become Executive Secretary of the OAIC); and Rev. Gulubane of the St. Philips Faith Healing Church of Gabarone, Botswana. Indeed, for African brothers and sisters involved in these relationships to get to know North American Mennonites in their own context has been important.

Current involvement

Nigeria

Since the departure of Darrel and Sherrill Hostetter in 1981, no expatriate Mennonites have been working extensively with AICs in Nigeria.

Ghana

Since the departure of Erma Grove in 1983, no North American Mennonites have been working with AICs in Ghana. U.S. Lutheran colleagues are helping AIC leaders to carry on what has indeed become their own school. The Organization of African Independent Churches (OAIC, Nairobi) is now working at a TEE program in Ghana from the base of the GNTI.

Ivory Coast

The ministry of David and Wilma Shank's presence among the Harrists in and around Abidjan is enriched by sharing some of their learnings from David's in-depth study of the thought of their Christian prophet, William Wadé Harris. This has included regular studies for a Harrist youth group in the Lycée Classique at Cocody. James and Jeanette Krabill's weekly Bible study program is reaching some six villages, and new calls are coming from surrounding Dida areas. Rod and Lynda Hollinger-Janzen are preparing to join that expanding work. Krabills have also translated into French a TEE study workbook from the OAIC in Nairobi, now being used elsewhere in French-speaking areas.

Botswana

Harry and Lois Dyck continue their ministry in Francistown. Some of the leaders taught through that program have become teachers in a broader TEE program organized by the OAIC. Irvin and Lydia Friesen, still working out of Selibe Pikwe, continue their relationships with different AICs.

Lesotho

John and Tina Bohn continue their rural development work under the umbrella of the Federation of Independent Churches. Harlan and Claire Debrun arrived in August 1983 and are picking up on the program of Jim and Vicki Egli and Stan and Lorri Nussbaum, who have terminated their ministries. The research of Stan Nussbaum on the relationship between the Old Testament and Lesotho culture will continue to orient the work of the church in this area.

Swaziland

Karl and Julia Sensenig (EMBMC) work in the AIC community of Gilgal, he as a teacher and she as a nurse. Peter and Leona Penner (MCC and EMBMC) devote part-time to Bible conferences. Darrel and Sherill Hostetter arrived in 1983 to pick up on the Bible teaching ministry and are undergoing in-depth orientation and language study in a village context with a Zionist minister's family.

Transkei

Larry Hills has moved from the capital city of Umtata to a village setting where he is pursuing his Bible teaching ministry under the Federation of Independent Churches.

Zaire (former Congo)

No Mennonites are working among AICs in Zaire today. However, a Kimbanguist preparing to become a seminary professor did his earlier studies in the West in the Mennonite Brethren Bible School in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He was later aided by MCC in his graduate studies and has taught at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana.

A January 1984 update on African independent churches reports 6,950 separate and distinct denominations in forty-three countries with 71,000 places of worship and 27.5 million affiliated members with another three million adherents. They are said to be increasing at the rate of 850,000 new members per year. In contrast to mission-planted churches, many of which called for a missionary moratorium in the early 1970s to permit them to evaluate their needs freely without Western mission supervision, many AICs perceive themselves to have been slighted—and thus unrecognized and unaided—by Western churches. Those that are open to biblical training for leaders will continue for the immediate future to be an important place where genuine partnership of missionaries can promote the growth of the church—in depth as well as in numbers.

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What African Indigenous Churches Can Teach Western Churches

DAVID A. SHANK

The great diversity to be found among African indigenous—or independent—churches (AICs) touches almost every aspect of their life: their origins, inspiration, dynamics, leadership patterns, liturgies, symbolism, roles in society, relationships to Western mission-planted churches. Indeed, so great is the variety that some would not even recognize themselves in some of the Western descriptions that have been made of them; nor would many of them recognize others and themselves as part of a common movement. Thus to venture—one more time—into the kind of generalizations that this topic requires is a great risk.

Nevertheless, because of the amazing vitality and proliferation of AICs and their recognized participation in the Christian religious spectrum, a valid question is to ask whether we in the Christian churches of the West have something to learn from them. We would insist that we have things to learn, and an important part of the Western mission to these churches is to learn from their strengths as well as their weaknesses. This is an essential dimension of the new era in Christian mission—the era of the church's fulfillment of geographical universality.

When these churches contact us on our turf they will offer teachings other than what we might expect to learn from visiting them on their own territory. We must be ready to hear those teachings; the nature of the world church requires it. Christ's new commandment to love one another calls for a rec-

iprocity that goes beyond a motley band of Twelve. At the end of the twentieth century since Christ's coming, that reciprocity reaches to the churches planted worldwide in both primal and secular contexts, in their regional parochialisms, their structures of deceptive power and their explosive faith and hope of the powerless. Here is a whole dimension of our worldwide mission that lies essentially unfulfilled. These few gleanings from AICs by a Westerner can be seen as one step toward fulfillment of our mission.

The irrelevance of the faith of the powerful

In their beginnings, many AICs grew out of a climate of protest against the power, pressures, and controls of the Western Christian missions, most often identified as an instrument of the political, economic, and sociocultural colonization of the Western powers. This teaches us that in the West where we have insisted upon separation of church and states, we have too easily assumed that our Christian mission was separated from our Western and national ethos and ambitions which in reality could easily become—albeit unconsciously—a major dimension of our mission. Billy Graham is said to have been astonished to discover retrospectively how much nationalism was injected into his foreign evangelistic crusades. More recently some U.S. Christian leaders have made direct appeals to government to use military power in ways that will "keep doors open" for the proclamation of the Word . . . by American missionaries.

AICs rejected domination by foreign Christians tied to foreign power and funding over which they (the AICs) had no control. The very existence of the AICs is a constant reminder that mission and domination, so tied together in Western Christianity and experienced by Africans as a "failure in love," are a horrible distortion of biblical mission tied with servanthood as it is in the christological perspective. Churches which reflect the ethos of the dominant world power, the richest nation on earth, the economic leader of the world, must be taught that lesson over and over again. What we ourselves perceive as faith is perceived by others as power. People are attracted to that power until they discover that they do not have access to it; they then must discover for themselves a relevant faith for people without power.

The gospel as power of liberation

According to some observers, in Africa within the context of AICs the gospel of Christ came into its own as a functional power of liberation. The Western missions, honest reflections of their sending churches, had been generally powerless to make this dimension of the gospel effective. Many of their converts lived out a superficial culture Christianity—the new colonial religion—without a radical liberation from the spiritual powers that kept them bound.

In AICs, however, Christ often penetrated more deeply into the African worldview and dealt with those powers that had for centuries been the guarantors of the traditional political and social structures. This caused a new sociopolitical reality to emerge from within the old society—the independent church as a community of faith living out its liberation. Thus AICs were somewhat better prepared to critique—often un-self-consciously—the new forms of Mammon, Caesar, and Mars, while mission-planted churches usually accepted the latter almost uncritically and integrated this modernization into their understanding of the new society.

In churches of the West, where we have traditionally seen political and socioeconomic structures as God-given and good, the gospel has not been perceived as a power of liberation from the spiritual powers and dynamics behind those structures. It has, rather, been used as an instrument of inner freedom to move in tune with them, thus making our political and economic systems and social patterns sacred. These then become the carriers of history, replacing the community of faith liberated by Christ.

One may observe, unfortunately, that AICs have often lost their capacity to critique in the time of post-colonial independence and that they too can slide easily into a rapid sacralizing of the new independent African structures. Their movement into this new relationship helps us to understand the concept of the "upside-down kingdom" of the free-reigning Lord Jesus Christ and the call of the gospel to create the new liberated community.

Faith as a combat

One is impressed in even superficial contacts with AICs how the climate of spiritual combat seems to predominate. One may hear prayers addressed to St. Michael, whom the book of Revelation presents as having won in the combat with the devil. People may come to the place of meeting as a place of refuge from the attacks of destructive powers. Prayer and fasting predominate as offensive and defensive arms.

A permanent struggle is engaged against occult powers, witchcraft, sickness and death, fetishism and idolatry, oppression, and repression. One must constantly be on the alert in order not to be overtaken or surprised.

Perseverance in combat is the only solution to vulnerability; no "point of arrival" exists where striving is over, and no "plateau of peace" is above the stress of struggle. That is reserved for the above and beyond; here below we are fighting the good fight of faith. Maturity is not moving beyond the combat, but knowing how to carry on effectively the spiritual warfare that is being waged.

Does this phenomenon simply reflect a religious culture with characteristics different from churches in the West because it does not reflect our own modern worldview? Or is this a dimension of faith as perceived by Christ and the apostles which we are not capable of demonstrating because we have already lost out in the fight? Or are individuals carrying on their personal combat all alone, scarcely daring to suggest openly—or fearful of creating the impression—that they are immature? Mission is combat for the salvation of the world; where combat is not valorized, brought out into the open, carried and shared together, the mission of the people of God is dulled. Where there is no mission, the people perish. Is the church of the West so hung up with money and management and its programmed growth that it has forgotten a fundamental dimension of faith? Mammon cannot chase Satan because it is his instrument in the combat against God.

We may have other ways of speaking about the life of faith in our Western churches, but if we eliminate the fundamental dimension of spiritual combat, this is surely more than just a cultural and language shift. AICs can teach us the necessity and the nature of the combat of the people of God.

Western interpretation of Scriptures questioned

One factor leading to the creation of AICs is said to be the production of Scriptures in the language of the people. When they started to read the Scriptures for themselves Africans discovered many things that had not been told them by the missionaries and their Western-trained leaders. At times the Africans seemed to be more at home in the reading of the Scriptures than in the interpretation and explanations which others had provided. We have already referred to the dimensions of liberation and combat, clearly present in Scripture, but the Western eyes with their own particular lenses did not read these dimensions, or they read them with different accents.

Indeed, Western-trained theologians in the mission-planted churches were themselves often impressed, as Africans, by what they called the "spontaneous theology" of AICs. The latter did not know that they were supposed to read the Scriptures through a theological perspective coming from the West; they simply read the Scriptures from the perspective of their grassroots needs and understandings, and their worship, practices, piety, and symbols all grew out of that reading. But they came out at a different place than their Western-trained African colleagues. Because of their cultural proximity to the Scriptures, they could vibrate with them in ways that modern Western Christians could not. All of this has had an effect upon African Christian theologians who had been taught that the theological and biblical understandings of the West were universal—the way that they should be understood and interpreted by all people.

The AICs, and after them the African theologians of the mission-planted churches, are teaching us that our Western theology is Western, that our reading of the Scriptures is a Western reading, that the claims of universality in our perspectives are in reality a part of our own provincial arrogance. This is a hard lesson to learn. When we hear their interpretation and their readings from the perspective of where they are coming from, our first reaction is often, "How provincial!" "How particular!" "How naive!" "What a strange reaction!" "How unbiblical!" In reality a simple confrontation exists between two different provincial readings. We need to hear them and their interpretation, and they need to hear us and our interpretation.

Walter Hollenweger writes about the AIC student in England who listened to his New Testament professor give an exposition of a gospel passage which dealt with fasting. The student felt something was lacking and discovered that the expositor had never fasted. For other Africans it was impossible to try to analyze unjust racial and social structures in England without ever having had the chance to sit and worship and eat with whites. Such things must be lived and not just analyzed and talked about. Participation is just as important as analysis for understanding.

We seem to have a hard time understanding that African talk about "white Christ" and his "foreign religion" is not an African idea, but one that the West gave them. To discover one's provincialism and the need to appreciate it as such and move beyond it is never easy. The AICs can help us learn to do so.

The awe-inspiring divine mystery

In our numerous contacts with Christians from AICs we have been impressed with the manner in which God and the ways of God are experienced and accepted as being awe-ful, unsearchable, and deeply mysterious. Thus their journey of faith has within it—often from the beginning—the dimensions of the unexpected, the unpredictable, the overwhelming. The counterpart to that is then their own spontaneous response of awe, holy fear, and sacred joy. These all find full expression in their piety, a deep respect for the "house of God" and all that is related to it: servants, liturgies, symbols, rituals, and an openness to signs, a direct word, a message from God.

One may learn of a sudden change in plans of a spiritual leader because of an inspired warning given through a servant girl. Messages from God may come to the whole congregation through recognized women "visionaries." A school-director-become-preacher will explain how, when he was a practicing "fetisher" (manipulator of occult powers), God spoke directly to him (his wife in the same room did not hear it, and he still does not know why not), telling him to destroy his fetishes, then to destroy the three that he had secretly saved, then to destroy the last one (whose destruction he thought would kill him), then to buy a Bible and study it, and then to attach himself to a group of illiterate independent Christians in order to teach them the Bible. He will further explain how God proved his power to other fetish practitioners when at his word a pot of occult medicines broke before their eyes.

One national leader of an AIC in Ivory Coast, a former Catholic altar boy and catechist, left his church and joined the AIC because only in that church did he find a deep respect for what is holy. In his church people remove their shoes before entering the place of worship and present themselves before the presence of the Lord in congregational worship only when participants are dressed in white.

Another group knows of mysterious names of God revealed to the leader through glossalalia. They use the names today, more than forty years later. The possibility of knowing and using those mysterious names adds to the holy character of their intercessions and their community. God's mysterious messengers—the angels—intervene every so often to give direction in the face of uncertainty and questioning. The life of faith in God is a life of mysterious wonder.

The first time he attended an AIC meeting, a seeker heard speaking in tongues for the first time and recognized his own situation in the interpretation which revealed knowledge of two major personal questions he was facing. His was a mysterious awe-inspiring beginning to a life of faith.

By contrast, so much of our Western Christianity can appear to be participation in a program rather than worship and a strong distrust of those mysterious dimensions which the AICs speak of as the spiritual—dreams, visions, relevations, direct messages from God, healing, casting out spirits, and speaking in tongues and their interpretations. Our long history of theological tradition and philosophical reflection through the Middle Ages, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the industrial, technological, media, and computer revolutions have rationalized our thought, made our understandings quite doctrinaire, ferreted out the problems about God, and dulled the mystery. I myself was taught in a Mennonite seminary thirty or forty years ago that one Western theologian called our Western religious situation one of "coming of age" and tried to think how to understand a religionless Christianity. More recently, however, another Western theologian has pointed out that the West has never had such a boom in religion—not necessarily Christian or Christian oriented. Has this boom occurred because the Western churches have made God over, domesticated God, Westernized God, and reduced the mystery, the sacred, the otherness of God's free Spirit?

The AICs, among the last to appear on the scene of church history, may have much to teach us about their newfound God and Lord, even though we were on the scene long before they were. Indeed, this may well be another illustration of one of Jesus' hard sayings: "The last shall be first." In any case, the Western churches, so bound to the rational, technological, logical **means** of their culture will have come to grips again with the holy mystery of God, their **end.** "God is Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The power of the laity in a community of spiritual gifts

On Monday, November 12, 1984, at their regular Monday night service, after inspired singing led by two young people, I preached for the brothers and sisters of the Universal Evangelical Association in Cotonou, Benin. The meeting was presided over by "Papa Dossou," the spiritual father of this zealous Christian congregation in a populous part of the city. I was translated by another preacher, and we were followed by Pierre, another preacher in the congregation.

During the daytime Papa Dossou is an inspector in the city-street-cleaning and garbage-disposal system. My translator is a plumber and owner of a small fleet of taxis, and Pierre is a shoe salesman. But on Sundays and four nights a week they become congregational leaders, spiritual counselors, moral guides, preachers of the Word of God. The Lord has called all of them to their active ministries in the church in addition to their full-time and demanding occupations. Outside the time required for their jobs, all of their time and energy is spent in evangelism and the edification of the church.

These men have had no formal Bible training in classes, but they have learned to read and interpret the Bible from one another, from tracts and pamphlets that have come their way, and from occasional books. But for them, **the** book is the Bible; they are thoroughgoing biblicists, reading and studying together, learning from one another, obeying what they know, and passing on what they have learned to the rest of the people in the congregation. As they do so, other spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit and are recognized and confirmed by the congregation which is indeed a community of growing spiritual gifts. Pierre, the shoe salesman, told us, "All of us are very thirsty for the Word; we want to drink ever more deeply of its life and power. The whole congregation is always thirsty for more—all the time."

These men are not religious professionals, an educated clergy who have studied how to lead worship, organize a congregation, administer the sacraments, conduct marriages and funerals, or choose appropriate music for a particular ceremony or church service. They know practically nothing of church history, historical theology, biblical exegesis and interpretation, sermon preparation, or pastoral counseling. They have been seized by the gospel of Christ, have experienced a new life of liberation, and have a powerful passion for God and his people and a compelling obedience to his Word. Their congregation has grown because of that passion and compulsion which they find sadly lacking in the pastors and congregations of the century-old missionary church in Cotonou. The Lord has taught them much through their many experiences, and they are growing and maturing in the Word of God and their obedience to him.

This situation is typical of many AICs all over Africa. If in many contexts some AICs appear to be only one stage removed from African traditional religions, in many others their passion and obedience and zeal have become a provocative challenge to the mission-planted churches who have from the beginning been conscious of being **the** church. The latter with their professionally trained clergy and theologians, their deep concern for social, economic, and political status, and their defensiveness about the institutional church and its traditions may often appear to have lost their "first love." At the same time, AICs with their nonprofessional, lay power appeal to the grass-roots masses and gather in the poor of the people and bring them the liberating power of Christ. No wonder one observer has called AICs the "Anabaptists of Africa."

The power of AICs is in the authenticity of their laity who operate and work freely as self-supported gifts of God to the people. Different gifts within the congregation create an equilibrium of power rather than a hierarchy of power; many functions in the church are assigned so that each member may have a place and a task. Sometimes this distribution will take place in groups—members promoted to "pray-ers" or pray-ers promoted to "cross-bearers"—an open recognition of the need to grow, to mature, to move forward, to assume more responsibilities, and to exercise more gifts. But in this community of gifts with all of the discernment that it requires is to be found a power among the laity that is not usual in the typical mission congregation with its clergy and laity distinction planted by the mission in bygone times.

The freedom of the Spirit to give and call forth gifts within the congregation that one discovers in the AICs comes as a challenge to our Western churches which have congregations to be served rather than a congregation of servants who are God's ministers to the world.

From judgment to learning

Many Western Christians may be astonished to think of learning anything from African indigenous churches, since much of past reaction to them from Western missionaries and mission-planted churches has often been negative. Blanket charges of sectarianism, syncretism, religious tribalism, unclear doctrine, misunderstanding of the Holy Spirit, exploitative leadership, weak Christology, and legalism have been made against these churches. Indeed some of those charges have been true for some of the movements. But some of the same things can be said of some of the mission-related churches in Africa. To continue to make such generalizations for either one of these complex realities is clearly an error. Both the mission-planted churches and the AICs have only recently emerged out of traditional African religious contexts.

In this article we have looked at a number of characteristics of AICs from which Westerners can learn: the concept of use of power, importance of the themes of liberation and spiritual combat, contextualized interpretations of Scripture, divine mystery, and importance of laity in a community of spiritual gifts. Further study and mutual sharing will uncover other learnings.

The Holy Spirit of God is indeed creating a new humanity in Africa. But much still remains to be understood and learned about the patterns and dynamics of such religious change effected through the impact of the mixture of the gospel with Western culture, modernization, and the consequences of colonialism. While that is being more fully understood and interpreted, it is clear that AICs and mainline churches are learning from each other. The churches in the West owe it to the Lord of the church and to themselves not to shut themselves off from what the Spirit is saying to them through the African indigenous churches.

Different Strands of One Rope: Using Various Methods of Theological Instruction

JAMES EGLI

Different methods of theological training are like the strands of a rope. Used alongside each other, they strengthen and complement each other and are stronger than any one or two methods could be by themselves.

Education by extension

When Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) began work with independent churches in Botswana and Lesotho, the assumed method of biblical instruction was extension education. The stated stance was, "We accept the standard Theological Education by Extension concept as a basic model but are always prepared to adapt it to local needs and situations."

As we look at it now, this statement may seem quite restrictive, but at the time it was a move in the right direction. Realizing the vast inadequacies and limitations of residential education, AIMM with this statement attempted to say that a more informal decentralized form of instruction was preferred—one that would be able to relate to churches at a more grass-roots level.

The extension method met different responses in the two countries. In Lesotho independent churches are smaller and fewer. Many classes have been started over the years, but most have dwindled and vanished. Another problem is that leaders have refused to be part of the classes. They have been threatened by the possibility of sitting next to younger, more educated people who could read and perform better in a classroom situation. After several years planners could see that if the Bible teaching program depended entirely on extension classes, it would wither to almost nothing.

In Botswana the extension effort has done much better in terms of the number of students and classes. Participation by leaders has also been greater than in Lesotho though still not as much as one would hope. Yet in other ways the extension method has not been successful. Teaching seems to have had little impact in the lives of churches and individuals. Scripture has not taken root and brought new freedom and life. No matter how contextualized the content and subject matter of the classes, the method itself has carried definite liabilities. It set Christian faith in a basically cognitive setting, implying that it was most relevant to those who could read and write well, that Scripture was to be learned and assimilated by the mind. The classroom situation failed to relate to life in its totality, even though the actual teaching content was aimed in this direction as much as possible.

Bible conferences

In 1982 we in Lesotho began using weekend Bible conferences following the example of a program similar to ours in Swaziland. The conferences have set teaching in a more festive and less pedantic setting. Participants share an eager, joyous spirit, and instruction is more likely to have impact and take root. Conferences also seem more culturally appropriate, and response has been significantly increased. Yet instead of competing, the extension and conference methods complement and strengthen each other. Conferences have created increased interest and participation in the classes. And classes have provided the most faithful and enthusiastic supporters of the conferences. Like two strands of a rope, the two methods belong side by side; then they are strongest and most effective.

Adding strands

Still, a many stranded rope is much stronger than one with only two cords, so we are presently seeking to use more methods and approaches. In particular, we are attempting more informal ministry, relating more closely to individual churches and leaders. Again, this type of ministry is strengthened by the other methods; at the same time it generates more interest for the conferences and classes. Book ministry is another strand that we have added as we try to strengthen and lengthen our rope. Response has been positive to sales of Bibles, study material, and books on family and development. The rope is made yet stronger as independent church people acquire more resources.

While the methods overlap to an extent, each also deals with special needs and appeals to a somewhat different audience.

The principle of the many stranded rope can be applied more broadly by diversifying smaller aspects of our work. For example, our Bible teaching committee originally publicized conferences only by mailed notices. Now we are beginning to advertise them also by radio and newspaper. At low cost more people can be informed and involved. Also, interest is heightened among those who receive news of the conferences through more than one channel.

Besides the present means of instruction, what is to stop us from using more methods and making the rope even better? Insights can be borrowed from various models and systems. Think of the vast educational resources available in these four areas: (1) traditional African culture and pedagogy; (2) biblical teaching and discipling models; (3) traditional Western educational systems (books, classes); (4) modern educational theory. We can be like the scribe-become-disciple of whom Jesus spoke: he "is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old" (Mt. 13:52). Combining elements from different training systems, we could at one time use informal ministry, extension classes, Christian initiation school, Bible conferences, funerals, weddings, youth work, choirs, intensive one-week seminars, and newspaper Bible studies.

Instead of approaching our task with one or two assumed methods and striving to make them fit or work, we should begin with the needs faced and purposes desired. With this starting point, we can apply various approaches to meet the needs and accomplish the purposes.

The various methods of theological instruction are like the strands of a rope. They belong together because they strengthen and complement one another. Let's seek to add new strands, making our service as helpful and effective as possible. In adding new methods we will strengthen our present efforts and reach new people and potential.

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Expectant Memory (Luke 24:13-35, 44-49)

ROELF S. KUITSE

This is the second of a five-part series, "Mission and Hope," which was first presented by Roelf S. Kuitse at the Overseas Missions Seminar of Mennonite Board of Missions in June 1980. Roelf has been a missionary, educator, and pastor in the Netherlands, Indonesia, West Africa, and the USA. He served as director of the Mission Training Center, Elkhart, Indiana, from 1979-82 and teaches there now.

Mission Focus *regrets two errors in the first part of this series printed in the September 1984 issue. The first two sentences of that article on page 40 should read: "Hope is integral to human life. As human beings, we are* not *captive like other creatures to the present, the now." On page 42 under "The prophets," the second sentence of the third paragraph refers to "the message that judgment purifies hope and frees hope from relying on the human self, on human* piety, *on the temple, on human power, on the nation."*

Away from Jerusalem

At the end of the Gospel of Luke we read the story about two disciples on their way to Emmaus. They left Jerusalem. They turned their backs to Jerusalem, the city where their story with Jesus had come to an end, where their hope had been buried, where their hope had changed to despair. Their feet moved away from Jerusalem, but their minds turned back again and again to what had happened there: "They were talking together about all these happenings" (Lk. 24:14 NEB). Their memories were sweet—the days they walked with him, with Jesus—and bitter—how unexpectedly and how cruelly did those good days end. They were puzzled about God's way in history, God's way of dealing with human history, God's way ending in defeat and death.

As a stranger joined the two disciples, they did not recognize him. That is a characteristic feature of the story told in Luke 24. Christ is a stranger, even to those who have long been his disciples (Jn. 14:9). Is that not many times also our story, the story of the church?

The stranger asked, "What is it you are debating as you walk?" (Lk. 24:17). The disciples stopped short, "their faces full of gloom" (another translation: "their faces downcast"). Their amazement was expressed in the words of one of the two: How is it possible not to know what has happened in Jerusalem? "You must be the only one who does not know" (v. 18).

And the disciples started to tell about Jesus of Nazareth in whom they had invested all their hope (Lk. 24: 19-21). Their hope was for the liberation of Israel, a hope based on what Jesus had said and done, on the powerful way he had spoken and acted. The background of this hope was the story told in the Old Testament, the story of God and his people, the story in which key words are "covenant" and "law," "exodus" and "exile," "Messiah" and "the coming of the nations" (see "The Way of Hope" in *Mission Focus*, September 1984). This is the story of human sin and rebellion and divine compassion, the story of how the wrongs of history are righted and how the rights of God are restored.

The story was interpreted by many in a special way. Election and covenant were something for Israel's sake only. The law was seen as a special privilege, lifting Israel above the nations. Exodus and the return from exile were powerful acts of God for Israel. The people living under Roman subjugation ardently desired and waited for a repeat of this kind of act.

This was the world of thought familiar to the disciples. "A prophet" . . . "powerful in words and acts" . . . "in the sight of God and the people" . . . will set Israel free. That is why they had so much difficulty with Jesus' words about suffering and defeat, about rejecton and crucifixion. These words did not fit into their picture of how Messiah should act. Reality was far away from their ideas, their dreams: "Our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and crucified him. But we had been hoping . . ." (Lk. 24:20-21).

In suffering—in the cross—the covenant finds its deepest expression. God tied himself to the world, in suffering and death showing how far in his love he is willing to go to bring the human partner back to himself, to overcome evil, to right the wrongs of history. Eyes and hearts have to be opened for **that** message, for **that** way of looking at suffering and defeat. Where that has not happened the message of the resurrection is only an astounding rumor, only a message about an empty tomb, a message unable to overcome despair and restore hope (Lk. 24:22-24).

Back to Jerusalem

Eyes and hearts of the disciples **were** opened (Lk. 24:25-32). After they revealed to the stranger how confused they were, how their hope had been defeated by death, Jesus gently rebuked them: "too slow of wit, too dull of heart." Then he started to open the Scriptures for them, showing them how divine promises and human expectations have found fulfillment in him in his suffering and resurrection. In patient impatience and compassion Jesus dealt with the perplexity, dullness, and confusion of the disciples. The recognition came when the bread was broken and shared. Eyes and hearts were opened. In the stranger, in his act of breaking and sharing, they recognized their Master. In the partnership with him they found their faith and regained hope.

The disciples had gone away from Jerusalem in despair about Jesus' crucifixion. They returned to Jerusalem in the wonder of his living presence. They had left Jerusalem with a memory of things that had passed: What is more definitive than death? They returned to Jerusalem with an expectant memory. What had happened—in the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus—became the basis for new hope, new expectation.

The message of the resurrection of Jesus is the divine affirmation that the way of Jesus is the only way that has a future. It is the way of obedient service and serving obedience. The message of the resurrection opens the future to the prospect of full glory like it was in and around Jesus. God will be honored, and human life finds its fulfillment in love. The kingdom of God is coming in full glory and manifestation.

Christians will harbor no illusions about the world. They have no reason for triumphalism. The world they are part of is the world in which there was no place for Jesus. However, the crucified Lord is the risen Lord, the basis for hope and expectation. Christians have no reason for defeatism. God pledged himself to goodness and grace in his dealing with humankind. That opens the future and gives hope to the world.

In mission we have to stay away from triumphalism as well as defeatism. Triumphalism bypasses the cross and forgets that

our Lord is a crucified Lord. Defeatism takes the facts of history too seriously and forgets that the crucified Lord is also the risen Lord.

Jerusalem—new point of departure

Jerusalem is mentioned a third time (Lk. 24:44-49). The first time, the disciples left Jerusalem where their hope died; they were left with only the memory of the past. The second time, the disciples returned to Jerusalem with hearts on fire after their encounter with the living Lord. Hope was regained. What started in Christ will continue and will gain the victory.

The third time, beginning from Jerusalem, the story about Jesus has to be told to all the nations. "It is you who are the witnesses to it all" (Lk. 24:48). These are witnesses with an expectant memory, an expectation based on what was promised and on what was done by God in Christ. From Jerusalem the story has to go to the ends of the world. At the end of time, in the days of the Messiah, the ends of the world and the nations of the world come within sight. That is mission: relating the human story, in east and west, north and south, to the story of the Son of Man, the suffering Servant.

From Jerusalem a new movement starts, but not in the manner of Babel: "Let *us* . . ." (see "The Way of Hope" in *Mission Focus*, September 1984). The new beginning, the new start in Jerusalem, is not the result of human endeavor, planning, or organization. No human—not even a pious person or the church—stands at the beginning of mission. The Spirit, God's Spirit, the Spirit promised to the disciples, is that for which the disciples have to wait. In the encounter with the living Lord the disciples have been made ready for the new beginning. Vision and hope have been restored. Now they have to wait for the coming of the Spirit so that in their witness they will "be armed with the power from above" (Lk. 24:49).

That is the next part of the story. The Spirit is at work in creating the church, at work in mission, to let the world share in the hope expressed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In review

Who Do You Say That I Am? The Christian Understanding of Christ and Antisemitism. By Joseph E. Monti. New York/Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1984, 98 pp., $3.95 (pb).

A Dictionary of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue. Edited by Leon Klenicki and Geoffrey Wigoder. New York/Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1984, 213 pp., $7.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Allen R. Guenther

On my desk are five books and one newsletter which address the relationship of synagogue and church. In addition to the two titles listed above, I have *Evangelicals and Jews in Conversation on Scripture, Theology, and History* edited by Marc H. Tanenbaum, Marvin R. Wilson, and A. James Rudin (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), *The Jew and the Christian Missionary: A Jewish Response to Missionary Christianity* by Gerald Sigal (New York: KTAV, 1981), and *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ After Auschwitz: A Study in the Controversy Between Church and Synagogue* by Jakob Jocz (Grand Rapids: 1981). The *Newsletter* is published by The Jews for Jesus.

At the heart of the concerns voiced throughout these pages is the distance between church and synagogue brought on by Christian anti-Semitism and coercive proselytism of Jews. Coercive methods of proselytism have given proselytism a pejorative connotation; anti-Semitism has reached its most hideous form in the Holocaust, which is identified by many Jews as being rooted in Christian attitudes and in the accusation of deicide against the Jews.

Genuine dialogue between people of these two faiths requires and can effect mutual understanding and the elimination of unfortunate suspicions and prejudices. This is a two-way street. To be fruitful, such interfaith dialogue—whether at the individual or collective level—will need to address the sins of the past which have resulted in so much suffering for the Jews. That will require confession, forgiveness, and willingness to share freely and personally feelings of mistrust, hatred, fear, and betrayal.

The books listed above begin the dialogue. The two edited works constitute an exchange of information on basic religious and theological concepts on which the church and synagogue are divided. In both cases the Jewish positions are primarily those of conservative Judaism. The Christian counterpart in *A Dictionary of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue* is basically Roman Catholic; *Evangelicals and Jews in Conversation on Scripture, Theology, and History* is conservative Protestant. Each subject is discussed by a representative of the respective faith tradition. The informational exchange in itself is enormously helpful. Even though Judaism and Christianity share biblical language and concepts, both language and concepts have taken on different meanings.

The Jewish responses are much more uniform than are those presented by their Christian counterparts. The evangelicals' commitment to the Scriptures leads them to dialogue on their interpretation. They are also looking for common ground on which to move beyond dialogue to bring the Judeo-Christian faith to bear on the issues facing American society and the world in which we live. Proselytism and the related tensions remain in the background, except for Leighton Ford's "A Letter to Richard" (Rabbi Richard Rocklin).

The Jewish-Roman Catholic dialogue (*Dictionary . . .*) proceeds largely on a shared understanding that Judaism and Christianity represent two separate but equally valid ways to God. This thesis is elaborated in Monti's *Who Do You Say That I Am?* in which he examines Peter's confessional reply: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." By giving primary weight and credence to the confessional statements of the New Testament and by relegating the reflective and theological formulations (principally those of Paul) to secondary significance, Monti is able to reach the conclusion that "[God's] presence in Christ is the only way *for Christians* to experience the otherness of God" (p. 84, italics mine). Jews will experience God outside of Jesus Christ from within their "internal history."

Jakob Jocz, a Jewish Christian, writes sensitively, empathetically, and knowledgeably about the Jewish-Christian conflict. At the same time he maintains that Jesus is the only way to God. That theme is also prominent in *The Jews for Jesus Newsletter* in which Jewish Christians appeal to Jews to respond to Jesus as the Messiah.

Gerald Sigal responds vigorously to Jewish evangelism by interpreting for Jews those passages of both Testaments which are most frequently used by Christian missionaries in attempts to convert Jews to Christianity. His counter-interpretations of the Hebrew Bible are, in many cases, superior to those of Christians, who tend to take texts out of context. Unfortunately, the same general affirmations cannot be given to Sigal's interpretations of the New Testament texts.

These books illustrate the general agreement Jews and Christians have reached on the issues which separate their faith traditions. They also highlight the distance which

still needs to be traversed before all the issues can be discussed with openness and mutual respect. When evangelism of Jews and the horrors of Auschwitz can be entered as agenda items, the dialogue will have reached a more profound level of mutual acceptance and productive exchange.

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Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History. Edited by the Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983, 224 pp., $9.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Robert L. Ramseyer

Minjung Theology contains papers presented at a conference held by the Theological Commission of the Korean National Council of Churches in Seoul, Korea, in October 1979. In addition it contains brief comments by James Cone and D. Preman Niles and an explanatory chapter by Suh Kwang-Sun David. The volume is divided into four sections.

1. Minjung and Theology in Korea
2. The Minjung Reality
3. The Minjung Roots of Korean Christianity
4. Minjung Perspectives in the Bible.

Because the book is essentially papers from a consultation, it suffers from repetition and a lack of internal coherence. Nevertheless, it is the best introduction to minjung theology available in English and deserves to be read and studied both by those concerned about Korea and those who are interested in the development of an authentically contextualized theology.

Minjung is a Korean word meaning the people, the crowds, what the Gospel of Mark calls "the multitudes." In minjung theology it refers to those in the Korean setting who have more often been acted upon than creators of their own destiny. At times this refers to all of the Korean people, at other times to those who might be seen as oppressed segments of the Korean population. In contrast to Latin-American theologies of liberation, minjung theology retains a strong ethnic particularity and does not attempt generalizations about other oppressed people. At the same time it does find its roots in the biblical materials, and analogies are drawn between the experiences of the people of Israel and the Korean people.

Han, the feeling of resentment which grows among an oppressed people, is an important element in minjung theology. How this *han* is dealt with and how it leads to or does not lead to creative political action and to a people becoming the actors in their own history instead of merely being acted upon, in a sense, is what minjung theology is all about.

Minjung theology is important for any of us who are concerned that the biblical message speak to people in their own settings. This volume is an excellent introduction to that theology.

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Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Relgious History of Afro-American People. By Gayraud S. Wilmore. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983, 288 pp., $9.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Donovan E. Smucker

Usually the restoration of fellowship between majorities and oppressed minorities includes two preliminary stages. The first stage is innocent goodwill in the new patterns of equality ending master-servant relationships. Next is the depth level where the minorities reveal anger, injury, and resentment with radical social change as a goal.

Vincent Harding, black historian, interpreted this second stream to his fellow Mennonites and the larger readership in his recent book, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981). Gayraud Wilmore is a black mainline Presbyterian with similar views. He has taught at three theological seminaries and is currently at New York Theological Seminary.

Wilmore's goal is to reconstruct a durable, old formula for classifying the patterns of black Americans' response to oppression. The **conservative** strategy which developed at Tuskeegee Institute in Alabama did not seek social and political equality but offered practical, vocational training for the lower parts of the job market.

The **radical** tradition was first articulated in the nineteenth century by Frederick Douglass, an orator and writer of considerable power, and W. E. B. DuBois of Atlanta University, who was the first great black scholar in America to address himself to black history, politics, and economic strategy. Douglass and DuBois viewed the conservative approach as an irrelevant answer to the enormous needs of people suffering under institutionalized racism as the aftermath of slavery.

Wilmore identifies with the strategy of Douglass and DuBois but finds it suffering from a fundamental error of omission because it overlooks the dynamics of black Christianity. This Christian orientation had three objectives: the quest for independence from white control, recovering the image of Africa, and acceptance of protest and agitation as theological prerequisites for black liberation and the liberation of all people.

The book is an intellectual and social history of the American black Christian community which oscillates between the conservative and the radical responses or what the author prefers to call the strategies of survival and liberation.

In testing the basic argument of the book with the remarkable career of Martin Luther King, Jr., one gets the impression that the black left never quite knew what to do about his career. No one had ever moved and motivated the black and white communities or challenged the white establishment like King did. Yet, his firm commitment to nonviolence and the pluralism of "black and white together" lessened his value for many black radicals. And, above all, King was squarely rooted in the Christian faith and the version of it expressed in the Baptist churches of the South. Martin Luther King is unthinkable as a prophet apart from the gospel and the church.

Another need in the book is for sharper definition of what it really means to be a black radical. Black nationalism and separatism have grave problems economically and politically. Many times the black nationalists and separatists who reject coalitions may be labeled as reactionary rather than radical. Especially in the last year a disciple of King, Jesse Jackson, who is involved in the dynamics of the black church, is offering a new assertion of black consciousness.

Meanwhile, the reader is grateful for the impressive way the Christian faith and life have found expression in the black community. The African Muslim and animist orientations were exchanged for the Christian way. Eric Lincoln in the Foreword points out how the blacks reshaped and recreated the white folks' religion, making the church the center of their lives as school, forum, political arena, social center, art gallery, conservatory of music, lyceum, gymnasium, and *sanctum sanctorum*.

The charismatic, *koinonia*, nonviolent, courageous, prophetic, and biblical black church is a great treasure in the earthen vessel of American culture. This book is an important key to both the treasure and the earthen vessel.

Donovan E. Smucker is professor emeritus of social science at Conrad Grebel College and the University of Waterloo (Ontario).

Ownership: Early Christian Teaching. By Charles Avila. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983, 214 pp., $9.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Henry Rempel

The origins of this book are the author's training in a Roman Catholic seminary in the Philippines and his involvement in the Filipino peasant movement. The Filipino peasants were struggling for land where the legal basis for land ownership is Roman law. Therefore, early Christian critiques of Roman ownership laws are relevant to the peasant struggles for development in the Philippines.

Specific passages on ownership are presented from the writings of Clement of Alexandria, Basil the Great, Ambrose, John Chrysotom, and Augustine. All authors cited were critical of Roman laws on land ownership. They saw absolute control inherent in Roman ownership laws, combined with a high degree of concentration of land ownership, as the cause of the wealth of a few and the poverty of many.

Such disparities prevent the realization of *koinonia.* The solution was seen to be either to provide for common ownership or to define ownership as a responsibility to use wealth for the benefit of the total community.

Where such a redefinition of ownership would be ideal, its practical application to a different situation today is open to question. We need more than a revival of the monastic movement.

First, early Christian thought viewed nature, specifically land, as bountiful. People appropriated this bounty to themselves via applying labor to land. From Adam Smith on, nature has become niggardly. Hence, capital took on a productive role in a way that did not exist previously.

Second, the discussion assumes a fixed level of output; if one group in society has more, then other groups must have less. This static view of the level of output died with the advent of the industrial revolution.

Third, the discussion ignores the incentive effects associated with land ownership. A change to common ownership, which the author seems to favor, ignores literature on the English commons, overlooks severe over-grazing problems experienced today on common pastures among pastoral groups in eastern and southern Africa, and avoids the distinct differences in productivity between private plots and communal land in both the Soviet Union and China.

The primary contribution of this volume is to focus some attention on the desperate plight of peasant farmers in the Philippines and to draw together in one place early Christian writings on land ownership. The discussion of ownership is limited. Either early Christian writers did not extend their critique to the ownership of slaves or the author ignores their discussion on that subject. The author's brief attempt—in the conclusion—to extend the discussion of ownership to capital is quite unsatisfactory as it is based on the simplistic Marxian labor theory of value. This volume is merely a first step in a thorough critique of the nature and place of private ownership in contemporary society.

Henry Rempel is professor of economics at the University of Manitoba.

The Bible and Liberating Political and Social Hermeneutics. Edited by Norman K. Gottwald. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983, 542 pp., $18.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Millard C. Lind

Norman K. Gottwald, professor of biblical studies at New York Theological Seminary, is best known for *The Tribes of Yahweh* (Orbis, 1979), a new sociological approach to the origins of early Israel written from a Marxist point of view. This present work, made up of essays contributed by twenty-eight writers, is a discussion of the sociological and political hermeneutic of Gottwald's earlier work as applied to Old and New Testaments, often in regard to issues of twentieth-century liberation movements.

The goal of this study is to try to bridge four chasms:

1. The chasm between religion and the rest of life by showing the relation between religion and social practice in biblical communities.

2. The chasm between the past as "dead history" and the present as "real life" by showing that the biblical past was once a live present and that the present is formed by a history which needs to be understood.

3. The chasm between thought and practice by showing that thought as "head-tripping" and practice as mindless activities must be overcome by thought informed by critical practice and by practice based on critical thought.

4. The chasm between academics and popular lay Bible study by clarifying what biblical specialists might have to offer to lay users of the Bible.

The broad sweep of the book is suggested by the five parts into which the articles are divided: "Social Scientific Method in Biblical Studies," "Social Class as a Hermeneutical Factor," "Sociological Readings of the Old Testament," "Sociological Readings of the New Testament," and "The Bible in Political Theology and Marxist Thought."

The various writers have diverse presuppositions, a few being dedicated Marxists, some devoted to a more closed sociological method, others feeling that the issues of the reality of God and social criticism have not yet been resolved. The articles on women in the Old and New Testaments (Phyllis A. Bird and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza) are especially helpful, as is the article by Gerd Theissen on "The Sociological Interpretation of Religious Traditions: Its Methodological Problems as Exemplified in Early Christianity."

Those of us in the Anabaptist tradition should be thankful when the Bible is seen as more than a source book for theology, when it is seen as a social critique of both past and present economic, social, and political systems. The radical character of that critique is lost, however, if one attempts to separate sociology from the action of God within and upon the life of the faith community.

Despite its lacks, this book is important reading for Christians seriously interested in the Bible's radical message to the twentieth century.

Millard C. Lind is professor of Old Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

God's Foreign Policy: Practical Ways to Help the World's Poor. By Miriam Adeney. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984, 140 pp., $6.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Eric Olfert

Miriam Adeney's Ph.D in anthropology, extensive overseas experience, and committed evangelical Christian stance allow her to write unapologetically and with authority on the subject of helping the world's poor. She writes to two audiences: workers in the field and their supporters back home. The book works on both levels, but Adeney is perhaps at her best when challenging those of us in North America.

This work fits into the continuing evolution of evangelical thought on involvement in ministries other than evangelization. Adeney gives evangelism top priority but makes a strong plea for dropping the dichotomy between spiritual and corporal ministries. She argues forcefully and well that non-Westerners seldom make this distinction and that Christian agencies have a real advantage over secular agencies because they can address these aspects in a unified way.

Adeney uses vivid illustrations, quotes, and mini-case studies to plunge the reader into the colors, smells, sounds, joys, and frustrations of working overseas. She uses her anthropological training to analyze and draw useful lessons.

Adeney specifically tackles the responsibility of the stay-at-home supporters in a head-on, yet strangely gentle way. A brief but penetrating look at the role of multinational corporations in creating and supporting injustice in the poor countries leads into an analysis of what we as committed North American Christians can do to influence them.

Adeney offers practical aids of how to relate to recently arrived refugees and steers this into a well-argued plea for more church openness to a "multi-ethnic mosaic" approach to church planting.

In the last chapter Adeney pushes the limits of current evangelical thought with a strong case for a Christian simple-lifestyle alternative.

The flow of the book is that it ranges rather widely for a slim 140-page volume, and some of it gets to be rather heavy going. Those who are completely naive in this field may find it hard work, but those who are somewhat aware will enjoy it and profit from it, as will the experts. This is an excellent choice for book studies and a must for church libraries and reading lists for workers overseas.

Eric Olfert, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, is a lecturer in water resources technology. He has spent eight years with Mennonite Central Committee in Canada and Africa.

Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Folk Islam. By Phil Parshall. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983, 120 pp., $6.95 (pb).

Reviewed by David W. Shenk

Most Christian reflection on Islam struggles with the issues raised by Sunni orthodoxy. This is right, for Muslim communities everywhere are profoundly affected by the undertow which tugs all Islamic spirituality in the direction of Mecca.

Nevertheless, Phil Parshall in this amazing book identifies another equally resilient undertow within Islam, the phenomenon of Sufi mysticism which calls Muslims toward a more localized or **folk** spirituality. Sufism exists in dynamic dialogue and tension with orthodox perceptions.

Some years ago when I first began a missionary pilgrimage in a Sunni Muslim country, I groped for an interpretive bridge between the gospel and Islam. Then correspondence with a renowned ethnographer and etymologist suggested to me that I take a look at Sufism. He said, "Sufism is the bridge."

Parshall has elucidated that bridge, noting both its pitfalls and its helpfulness. In this noteworthy book, the author perceives of Sufism as an indication of the inner spiritual quest of Islam for a fellowship relationship with God, a relationship which orthodoxy hardly perceives as being legitimate. Yet within the Sufi phenomenon that quest is made legitimate. Through the charismatic saint the devotee is brought into the very presence of God.

The author describes the development of Sufism from a historical perspective, noting the spiritual yearnings which that quest reveals. He then develops the basic beliefs of the Sufi phenomenon such as the veneration of mediational saints, the pilgrimages to sacred spots, the stages in mystical development toward absorption into divinity, the tendency to accept an incarnational view of divinity, the quest for power, the absolution of sins through the repetition of the sacred names of God, and the communities which are developed around these themes.

Parshall describes many of the practices of Sufi and folk Islam. Although these descriptions are particularly apropos to the Asian communities in which Parshall served for many years, my perception is that many of these descriptions are also applicable wherever mysticism is practiced. Although there will be some local variations, a significant contribution of this book is that it opens one's eyes to perceive and appreciate the folk dimension of Islam which interacts dynamically with orthodoxy in most Muslim communities worldwide. Although some of the animistic qualities of the Asian Islam Parshall describes may be less apparent in secularized societies, the mystical expression and the phenomenon of sainthood is nevertheless quite pervasive.

Although Parshall appreciates many qualities within Islamic Sufism, he is also cognizant of its problems. He addresses the problematical issues both from the perspective of orthodox Islam and also from a Christian stance. He looks particularly askance at the tendency of some of the living saints to use their spiritual power to enhance their wealth. He is disturbed by the superstition and magic which often accompany Sufism.

In the concluding chapters the author describes ways in which he believes the Christ of the New Testament can be communicated in a relevant way to Muslims who are already somewhat amenable to incarnational theology through their exposure to Sufism. He sees in Jesus Christ, the divinely appointed mediator between God and humans, a unique and definitive fulfillment of the spiritual quest of Sufi Muslims. He sees in the resurrection of Jesus the fulfillment of the power theme; in the presence of the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of the yearning to have a living relationship with God. He sees in the church a fulfillment of the quest for community which is celebrated in the pilgrimages to the shrines.

In the final pages of the book, Parshall develops some specific suggestions on ways in which the Christian community in mission can become present and contextually relevant within a Sufi milieu. He gives specific examples of expressions of this kind of contextual commitment with which he is personally acquainted.

Although Parshall is aware of the problem of syncretism in such approaches to communicating the gospel, I wish he had said more about that. Christian experience in Ethiopia, for example, is that sometimes the Christian belief in Jesus as mediator is merged with that of the Muslim mediational saints; the two converge so sublimely that no differences are perceived. Christians and Muslims begin worshiping at their mutual shrines together, apparently oblivious to the distinctiveness of Jesus Christ as **the** appointed mediator between God and humans.

The second issue which deserves mention is that frequently the redemptive analogies, to use Don Richardson's terminology, which are found in Islam or any other religion can in themselves be perceived as **the** truth. The redemptive paradigm is accepted as reality rather than perceived as an indication pointing to the truth.

I wish Parshall had explored these two problems more thoroughly, for they are disturbingly significant. Nevertheless, this book is a singular contribution to the question of contextual Christian presence and witness among Muslims. It should be must reading for anyone who is seriously concerned about sharing the gospel with Muslims.

David W. Shank, Secretary of Home Ministries for Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, Salunga, Pennsylvania, served sixteen years in Somalia and Kenya, particularly in witness to Muslims.

Dr. Sa'eed of Iran. By Jay M. Rascoli and Cady D. Allen. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1983, 192 pp., $6.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Daniel Nickel

Dr. Sa'eed was a Kurdish medical practitioner who converted from Islam to Christianity at age seventeen. His nephew, Dr. Jay M. Ras-

coli, has produced a readable biography from firsthand knowledge. This book spans Dr. Sa'eed's entire life from 1863 to 1942, highlighting those experiences which relate to his witness for Christ in a world hostile to the gospel.

The time period falls into that era of missions which was concerned mainly about the survival of the Nestorian and Jacobite churches in Iran. Evangelistic efforts were so dangerous that Muslim conversions were rare indeed. For this reason conversion stories such as this one certainly brought encouragement and hope to struggling missionaries and evangelists.

During this same period Christian polemics was used as a method of evangelism. Pfander's *Balance of Truth* and Tisdall's *The Sources of Islam* were much in use. Dr. Sa'eed used both of these in his witness to Muslim mullahs, inviting upon himself misery without commensurate fruit to compensate. Later he discovered the blessedness of demonstrating God's love for Muslims in a self-effacing manner and through deeds of mercy and kindness. He also discovered that patient and prolonged Bible studies with Muslim seekers was a more fruitful method than was polemics.

One stands amazed at the resoluteness of Dr. Sa'eed's faith in God's protecting power. Countless are the incidents where evil people determined to kill him, yet he was consistently led to safety: once by his own brother who was still a Muslim; another time by a Muslim mullah; a third time he was given refuge by an aged woman. Only once did he carry a knife with him, an act he later regretted. The credit for such a clear policy of nonresistance goes, I believe, to a Plymouth Brethren family in London who took him in as their own son while he was studying medicine there.

What impact might a book like this have for Christian missions today? As a missionary to Muslims myself, I find it to be a grim reminder of how difficult it is to lead Muslims to Christ **in some parts of the Muslim world.** Times have changed; climates have changed; methods have changed. Witness the three million Muslims who have converted to Christ in Indonesia during the past fifteen years alone. Witness also the reported quarter million converts in Bangladesh since its independence in 1971. These are the stories that mission boards and missionaries should feast on now. Yet our libraries, both personal and public, are incomplete without a copy of *Dr. Sa'eed of Iran.*

Daniel Nickel is a missionary to Muslims in Hyderabad, India, and a lecturer in Islamics. He served as a missionary to Muslims in Indonesia 1975-80.

Melanesians and Missionaries. By Darrell L. Whiteman. Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1983, 583 pp., $15.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Lawrence M. Yoder

In *Melanesians and Missionaries* a missionary anthropologist seeks to analyze the cultural change that occurred in the conversion of Melanesians to Christianity. He uses a special set of techniques and methods called ethnohistory, which involves the use of information and understanding gained through both participant observation in the field as well as the analysis of written sources. It involves the analysis of change taking place from period to period in addition to the more traditional emphasis in anthropological research on understanding a culture at a particular point in time.

The modeling of this methodology is one of the special contributions of this book. It is mission and church history written with a profound understanding of the dynamics of cultural change. It is also ethnographic writing with an historical perspective.

Another special contribution of this study is its demonstration that commitment to the missionary enterprise can significantly augment the anthropological study of the cultural change resulting from the work of missionaries.

Chapter one of this book is a masterly discussion of theoretical and methodological considerations related to understanding cultural change. Chapter two deals with Melanesian society and culture prior to missionary contact. The next four chapters deal with the periods of contact, penetration, absorption, and autonomy in the development of the church of Melanesia. The final chapter analyzes the role of missionaries as agents of cultural change.

"My task was a herculean one," says the author in the preface. More careful delimitations might have been helpful. A more adequate research base is needed for the comparisons made of the Melanesian (Anglican) Mission and the Church of Melanesia which grew out of the work of that mission with other missions and churches.

What is the significance of the claim that the Church of Melanesia is more of an "island church" (as opposed to European) than others (p. 376)? The criterion cited as basis for this judgment is the absence of expatriates in leadership positions, which is quickly shown to be not necessarily a sign of indigeneity. The loose-knit structure of some of the other churches is perhaps much more in harmony with traditional social structures than the episcopal hierarchy of the Church of Melanesia.

The first chapter mentions the Melanesian worldviews in contrast with Western worldviews. Little of the later discussion on cultural change comes back to this important level of analysis.

As for attention to detail, someone else who was present at Selwyn College in January 1981 told this reviewer that the headmaster, the secretary/bursar, and half the teaching staff were Europeans. This is in contrast to the "small minority" reported to be such by the author (p. 407, note 133).

For historians, anthropologists, and missionaries this is one of the most important books on mission published in 1983.

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Book Brief

An Annotated and Classified Bibliography of English Literature Pertaining to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. By Jon Bonk. Metuchen, N.J., and London: American Theological Library Association and Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1984, 132 pp., $15 (pb). This bibliography consists of some 570 items arranged in five chapters: General Works, History and Development, Teaching and Practice, Literature and Scriptures, Organization and Government. This work is an indispensable tool for anyone wishing to do research into the history, life, and practices of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the English language. It opens up an impressively rich body of literature. This work is a model of organization, well indexed, and handsomely bound.—*Wilbert R. Shenk*

Editorial

Among the several major themes which have dominated mission thinking since 1970, one has claimed the premier place: contextualization. Certain issues are always present: relationship between word and deed, church/mission and political order, the meaning and scope of the gospel, and appropriate strategies. Other issues sweep in on a tide of new consciousness and in time recede.

The insight which emerged on the tide of experience in the nineteenth century was that the goal of missions was to bring into being an indigenous church. The three-selfs formula offered the criteria for determining whether this was happening.

A reading of the history of the first several decades of the modern missionary movement will uncover the reasons why mission leaders were driven to this insight. As a result of the methods which missions had employed, the churches that emerged were anemic, dependent, and lacking in indigenous leadership. They resembled "cut flowers" in a vase more than thriving plants. This insight challenged missions thought but did not revolutionize missions practice.

Missions history is dotted with indigenous Christian movements which have arisen in protest against this failure on the part of missions to practice what they professed. As Harold Turner points out, the oldest continuous expression of this kind of protest is the single congregation formed by Narragansett Indians at Charlestown, Rhode Island, in the 1740s and still in existence.

The African continent has been particularly fertile soil for these mutations—a new combination of Christian insight and African form and vitality. In his survey of these movements, *Schism and Renewal* (Oxford, 1968), David Barrett estimated there were some 6,000 groups in Africa.

Increasingly we have come to recognize that this phenomenon has posed a challenge to both Western missions and the churches founded by these missions. David Shank identifies these learnings for us.

The overarching importance of these movements is the way they have underscored the absolute necessity of cultural context for everyone who hears the gospel. Every human being develops within a cultural matrix. Each one develops a grid through which life is experienced. That grid is formed out of language, values, relationships, geographical setting, and even the smells which make up one's environment.

When the three-selfs formula was propounded mid-nineteenth century, it was still widely assumed that Western culture was the standard by which all other cultures were to be judged. Today we acknowledge that all cultures can be vehicles for communicating the message of Jesus, all cultures can be used by demonic powers, and all cultures have the right to be respected for their particular values.

This changed perspective on culture has resulted in an enlarged and more complicated agenda for the missionary. *It demands of the missionary to be respectful of a culture and attempt to enter it reverently.* But enter it the missionary must through competency in language, identification with a people in their aspirations and dreams, and respect for the values which have helped them survive.

It demands of the missionary to acknowledge the gaps in insight and provincialism of the missionary's own culture. This is a call to be self-critical without being self-destructive, to be able to acknowledge who I am and offer that as a part of the gift I bring to another people.

It demands of the missionary to receive gratefully the gifts of insight that can be carried back to the sending group. The rest of the Christian church is being enriched through learning of the experiences of Chinese brothers and sisters who were faithful during thirty years of intense opposition and persecution. Any group which has demonstrated that kind of staying power deserves to be listened to with respect.

This concern for context is a concern for greater authenticity and integrity of faith. By ridding our thinking of a monolithic and foreign/Western standard, we are discovering that the earthen vessels come in many shapes and sizes; but the transcendent power is of God.—Wilbert R. Shenk

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MISSION FOCUS

From One Beggar to Another: The Story of a Language Learner

MARTHA L. THOMSEN

In 1981 Jeff and I promised three years of our lives to work in Southern Sudan with the Dinka people. Since we knew little of Sudan, we ferreted out books in libraries and looked up newspaper and magazine articles to catch up on recent history. Materials were scarce, and as our excitement increased, I also began to harbor misgivings about the assignment. Having lived most of my life in urban areas, I sensed I was unprepared for working in rural Africa. But books were not to be my major resource for learning. Instead, I was to do my learning by confronting two riddles—riddles that reflected Africa.

August 15, 1981, found us in steamy Juba, Sudan. We had our first encounter with fellow expatriates who freely offered their endless tales and insights into Dinka culture. We heard many comments on how Dinkas beg with no shame from foreigners. One American woman admitted that she rarely left her house so as to avoid the persistent begging.

Even though I did not fully believe the stories of the Dinka culture, the comments did feed my own fears and feelings of inadequacies. My heart was overwhelmed with anticipated difficulties. At the same time I clung to the idea that all peoples, whoever they are or however they live, are well meaning and hold strong values of good. Any behavior to the contrary is founded on sound reasons such as to ensure one's survival. I battled with my contradictory thoughts.

In mid-September we arrived in Thiet, a small village about 400 miles northwest of Juba. Six police officers armed with Lee-Enfield rifles and two or three council clerks governed the town, which had no mail service, no public transportation, no utility service, and no fresh-vegetable market. We hauled our water from a well in forty-two-gallon drums. Expatriates referred to Thiet as an outpost for obvious reasons.

The Dinkas perceive their life in terms of their cattle. Cattle camps established in areas unknown to us, therefore, are central to the tribe's life. Thiet is on the edge of their world, like a diversion or detour. Warriors pass through the marketplace to recount tales of past adventures and to flirt with the young women, but they soon return to the camps near to their hearts.

The first riddle solved

Bona Bol, a primary school teacher in Thiet, was willing to spend an hour a day helping me learn Dinka Rek. My first text consisted of essential phrases for opening and closing conversations. With the drills taped during our one-hour session, I practiced the phrases in anticipation of using them that same day. With trepidation, I ventured into the village to put my text to use.°

Since harvest was to occur the next month, the sorghum, the staple grain in Southern Sudan, was standing ten feet high along the paths and permitted little visibility. The paths were only a foot wide and meandered every which way, making me feel like a rat in a maze.

I came to rely on the network of paths for language learning, as they provided a casual context to meet and to speak with Dinkas. Every path led to the middle of a homestead where I could stumble through my new phrases with an amused and somewhat perplexed audience.

After the third day of this routine, the little children saw a great opportunity to cure their own boredom. As I wandered around they joined me, stretching out hands to clasp mine. Others ran ahead to announce my arrival in the next homestead. I trailed behind, entering the clearing to find the homestead members waiting in anticipation.

We greeted each other. They pursued the conversation with questions, and I attempted to curtail it with, "That is all I can say in Dinka. I am sorry I don't understand you." They would double over in laughter and bid me well. As I continued my walk, the children ran ahead to herald my arrival at the next homestead.

By the second week my vocabulary increased and I learned some simple sentence structures. I would understand a word here and there. One day after I finished my walk through the homesteads, I met two nicely dressed Dinka women going into town. I greeted them, and they returned the greeting. Then came a surprise request I understood perfectly.

"You give me your clothes."

I could not believe my ears. The statement hinted of a command, yet the two women looked so pleasant and friendly. They perceived my confusion and repeated themselves, thinking I had not heard correctly.

"You give me your clothes."

Martha Larson Thomsen is now a Mennonite Central Committee worker in Swaziland. This article, based on her experience as an MCC worker in Sudan, was first presented at the Toronto Institute of Linguistics, June 1984.

Note: ° *This approach to language learning was originally outlined in* Becoming Bilingual *by Donald N. Larson and William A. Smalley, Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1972. It was made more popular with* Language Acquisition Made Practical *by E. Thomas Brewster and Elizabeth S. Brewster, Pasadena, Lingua House Press, 1976.*

I collected myself and replied with a friendly smile that matched theirs, "No."

They were taken aback by my reply. I explained that I was on my way home, so we parted ways.

On the way home I reflected on what I had heard earlier in Juba about how Dinkas regularly beg from people.

Bona came over later that afternoon for my lesson, and I brought up the incident with the two women, hoping he could give me some insight. I described the situation and admitted feeling "taken in," since I did not know how to react. I asked him what I should say and how I should react when it happens again.

He paused to think and began to tell me of a time when someone begged from him. While a schoolboy, Bona had just purchased some clothing for his family when an older man requested some of them. Bona politely persuaded the man it would be a mistake for him to comply. The man agreed and left without a grudge.

In synthesizing what had happened Bona listed two rules that all Dinkas abide by when it comes to begging. First of all, if the person making the request is from another clan, one is under no obligation to give. However, one cannot outrightly deny the request. The second rule is that one must persuade the other person that compliance is impossible for reasons beyond control or that the request is inherently a bad idea. Bona assured me that no offense would be taken if I were honest.

I was delighted to have some guidelines for future encounters, but Bona still had not explained why Dinka people beg so much. This was my first riddle. The answer did not come quickly or easily.

In the following weeks I spoke with many women who asked for my clothes. It seemed everyone wanted something from me, while before I never noticed the requests. I quickly learned to speak demeaningly of my clothes, how dirty and dull they were in comparison to their bright dresses. In all these encounters with strangers, never were any goods exchanged. Conversations went like this:

Martha: "How did it dawn with you?"

Stranger: "It dawned well. And you?"

Martha: "Well. Where are you going?"

Stranger: "I am going home. Where are you going?"

Martha: "I am going to the market."

Stranger: "You give me your clothes."

Martha: "But my clothes are so ugly. Look at the stains here and here."

Stranger: "No, they are nice clothes."

Martha: "No, no. Your clothes are much more beautiful."

Stranger: "You are a good person. You speak Dinka well."

Martha: "I speak only a little Dinka and it isn't very good. Okay, I will find you later."

Stranger: "Okay, I will find you later."

Bona was right. No one was ever offended by my response. They never pressured me to comply with their request. It was almost as if they anticipated my answer and did not want my clothes in the first place.

Months went by, and Bona left Thiet, not to return for several years. Through reading and watching, I began to get a feel for what the ideals of Dinka life were. A marked characteristic of these begging encounters did not fit with what I saw. The begging was blatant and aggressive, while other behavior suggested the Dinkas were oblique.

For example, when a Dinka friend visits my home, we talk for an hour about things in general. The purpose of the visit is hidden until we are about to say good-bye. The majority of the time is spent chit-chatting, giving the visitor an opportunity to size up his or her host. Likewise with Dinka folk stories. They never end a story with a moral. If the listener cannot distill the lesson, he or she must ask the storyteller questions to elicit the intended lesson.

Beginning from this assumption about Dinkas, I deduced that when strangers asked me for my clothes they really did not want my clothes. Their real desires were masked.

They did not want to establish a long-lasting friendship with me, because they never pursued me or manipulated me to establish such a relationship. The only plausible answer I could think of was that they wanted an excuse to speak with me to discover what kind of person I was. Was I a stranger who was gracious and clever? Was I someone who was willing to enter their world? Begging was the excuse they needed to answer these questions.

Begging from someone is not only a good way to find out if the other person is gracious, but it also socially raises that other person to the level of benefactor. The beggar puts himself or herself in a position of dependency by making a request of the stranger. The stranger is given the role of "have" and the beg-

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gar assumes the role of "have-not." Therefore, begging is an appropriate verbal game among Dinkas to use with strangers.

For years Dinkas had approached foreigners in their polite manner by begging from them. They were curious about these visitors and wanted to draw them into their world through this verbal game. But each time they initiated the game, the foreigners refused to play. They would not play the role of benefactor even though there were no tangible obligations. The Dinkas, who are fun-loving and jovial, must have been unimpressed with the foreigners. Foreigners became people who could not take a compliment and were too serious about life.

The foreigner, on the other hand, had good intentions of learning the language and culture. But all such intentions were soon overruled because the habit of begging became too repulsive. Since they could not change the habits of two million people, foreigners simply avoided contact with Dinkas outside of their work situation.

Once the riddle of begging became clear to me as a language learner, I wondered if it was also appropriate for me to beg from strangers. I did not know and had no one to ask from whom I could get a reliable answer. I experimented with my responses to other beggars.

Then my day came. I was walking into town with a young boy to do an errand. Going in the opposite direction was a warrior with two chickens. He was talking with the Dinka medical assistant who worked in Thiet.

As we neared I prepared my words carefully. We greeted each other and asked where the other was going. With a straight face I pointed to the chickens, and said,

"You give me your chickens."

The warrior, not anticipating my assertion, rambled on with the medical assistant, whose eyes were fixed on me in astonishment. I repeated my line.

"You give me your chickens." The medical assistant began laughing quite loudly and cued the warrior that I was talking to him.

"What did she say?"

"She asked you for your chickens."

The warrior turned to me and nervously gathered his wits and began a long explanation saying the chickens were purchased to pay a diviner to cure someone in his family who was sick. In fact, at that moment he was on his way to the diviner's hut.

I grinned, accepted his story, and said good-bye. Inside I was elated. It worked. The warrior understood my intentions and played the game with me. It was my shining moment.

The ongoing riddle

But the story is not yet complete. A second riddle remained unsolved. When Dinkas blatantly make requests of complete strangers they do not anticipate acquiring the item. At other times they want what they ask for. Yet, acquiring lots of material goods prohibits a Dinka from taking care of cattle—which is the tribe's sole vocation. Possessing lots of things and holding on to them touches on the immoral because it challenges the Dinkas' purpose for living.

Godfrey Lienhardt, an Oxford anthropologist, worked among the Dinkas in the 1940s and wrote several books from his research. He has recorded a myth that hits deep into Dinka thinking. Here it is in a nutshell.

Many, many years ago there was only one Dinka man on earth, and his name was Garang. His wife's name was Abuuk. During this time, heaven and earth were tied together by four pieces of rope, one at each corner. God often visited Garang, and Garang would return these visits. Like most Dinka women, Abuuk was in charge of planting the grain. One year she purposely planted a bit more than they could eat. Maybe she thought some might spoil, or maybe she anticipated many guests that next year. Whatever the reason, the fact remained that she had planted too much. At harvest, God visited Garang and saw that they had harvested more grain than they could eat in one year. As a punishment, God cut off the four pieces of rope connecting heaven and earth and to this day, man cannot visit with God.

This myth illustrates what could be called the sin of excess. Dinkas believe that God will not tolerate this sin. They plant only what they can consume and acquire only things that they need. Regardless of that, some Dinkas are wealthy. In fact, several in Thiet were relatively affluent, but they were also benefactors to clan members. Their wealth proved they were good administrators and astute in handling people and things.

In our backyard, where all of Thiet could see, we stored our eight 42-gallon drums of diesel fuel, four of kerosene, ten of aviation fuel, and one of gasoline. Beside the fuel were piles of zinc roofing sheets and various cuts of lumber. In our house we had a six-month supply of food to carry us through the coming wet season. Sudanese roads were unreliable during that time, so we were required to make large orders.

Consequently, Jeff was seen as the foreigner's benefactor/chief. Friends and employees became pseudo clan members as they viewed him as one of their benefactors. They asked for kerosene for their lamps, batteries for their radios, food for their babies, and lumber for their homes. When would the requests end? How were we to handle these needs? The requests were not made by strangers, but by friends and employees. This was not the simple verbal game I played during my walk through the homesteads. This type of begging carried an obligation of giving.

If the fuel had personally belonged to us, we would have gladly given it. However, the fuel belonged to our supporting agency and we were prohibited from selling or giving it away. Our Dinka friends did not understand our predicament and thought we were being dishonest.

How could there be mutual understanding if we saw our lives of service as faithful obedience to God and they saw our lives as sinful disobedience? This was the second riddle. It was a riddle we never solved, and its irony gripped me. We had come to show Christ's love, and the Dinkas saw only our sin of which we never repented. There were no answers, only questions and regrets.

During my years in Thiet, I was befriended by a dear Dinka woman. Saada stopped by to see me often. She was a tremendous source of information and comfort to me. She understood well my needs as a language learner, maybe even more than I understood them.

One morning we were chatting in my porch drinking hot Sudanese tea. She commented that I had changed my sandals. She was right. A week earlier I quit wearing one pair because they were pinching my toes. I pulled out a second pair and put the others aside. I felt a bit awkward being watched so closely, so I fell silent. Then in a quiet voice she asked if she could have them. The subconscious "packrat" in me winced. But before I blurted out "No," or launched into a long explanation for why I could not give them to her, I realized I would never wear those sandals again. I quickly brought them to her, happy at the thought that I could in a small way participate as a benefactor without breaking agency rules.

Her tactful comment and clever choice impressed me. Taking the role of a beggar she graced me with the role of benefactor in a small way. But for simple graciousness, I was the "have-not" and I was the beggar.

Reflections on the Mennonite Church in Java

SUHADIWEKO DJOJODIHARDJO

Suhadiweko Djojodihardjo was moderator of the Javanese Mennonite Church, 1948-1983. This church originated because of mission work of European Mennonites in Java. In 1982 Rev. Djojodihardjo and his wife visited the Netherlands on the occasion of the jubilee of the Doopsgezinde Mission Board. Alle G. Hoekema, a Dutch Mennonite pastor, conducted this interview with Rev. Djojodihardjo at that time. The interview was first published in the Algemeen Doopsgezind Weekblad *in November 1982. The translation is by Peter J. Dyck.*

Rev. Djojodihardjo, what was your high point in the years when you were moderator of the Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa (GITJ—Javanese Church)?

Since its beginning in 1966 many people found their way to the church. I regarded this as a wonderful opportunity from the Lord. During those years, many of our people were active in the church, and they were active in the villages and witnessed for the gospel. Those were years that brought much joy and blessing. So many people in such a short time joined the church.

Second, the position of our Indonesian Church was difficult. On one hand, the other churches in the country did not regard us as full and genuine churches; they regarded us as a church, and yet it wasn't really a church. We were small, of course. On the other hand, we also experienced enmity from non-Christians around us, especially since we found ourselves in the center of activities of other religions. Every now and then we felt pressured from those groups. That is why we tried so hard to serve the entire population through schools, a hospital, and by participation in the village development and reconstruction of the country. Even if those efforts were on a small scale, we were able to participate in all of these things. Such involvement was a satisfying and rewarding experience for us.

In recent years many changes have occurred in your church. In addition to the increase in membership, what reasons do you give for those changes?

When I was chosen moderator, I saw that the church was not only small, but it was also weak and inactive. I was upset and sorry about that. Other churches were much more active. Occasionally, I had contact with the chairman of the Gereja Isa Almasih (Church of Jesus the Messiah), who was also the secretary of the Christian University of Salatiga. I was also a member of that board. I saw that their church was active in youth work and Bible study. Now many of our congregations also have such activities. We have Bible study groups in the villages, catechism instruction, and other activities. This is where we notice a remarkable change.

Another matter was that of the collections. That has always been a problem: Should we take a collection, or is placing a collection box in the church sufficient? The older missionaries said that on the basis of Scripture it was enough just to have an offering box in the church. But that way we got little into the treasury. We found our people had to learn to give. People had to be taught to accept greater responsibility for the work of the church. That, too, has really changed.

For example, one congregation was poor, as the land in its vicinity did not yield much. But then they discovered that the soil was ideal for clove trees. After that we saw that the people could give a lot to the church. In fact, they even built a new church. When the economic situation is fairly good—which at the moment it is not—then the congregations surely can take care of themselves.

How does the church deal with political questions such as peace issues?

Our situation is different from that in the West. You think about prosperity for the people, prosperity which you already have. We, on the other hand, have to think about the prosperity which is not yet a reality. Some do not even have enough to eat. We did not formerly reflect on these questions together with our government. But now we dare to speak on this matter. Nevertheless, those who oppose the government policy sometimes will have to bear unpleasant consequences. We have to accommodate. We are on the road to democracy, but it is a long road and a difficult process. As far as the prophetic ministry of the church is concerned, we usually cooperate with the other churches within the Indonesian Council of Churches. We have to be careful in this.

How is the working relation and cooperation of your group with the other brotherhood in Indonesia that has an Anabaptist background?

The existence of both churches is historically conditioned. The other church, Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia (GKMI), stood on its own feet from the beginning, although its founder, Tee Siem Tat, received lessons from the missionaries such as Thiessen. In the beginning, therefore, the two churches had no ties. Our church did not get our independence until May 30, 1940, and since then we have tried to make contacts with the GKMI.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the Europaisches Mennonitisches Evangelisations Komitee (EMEK) began joint projects, but projects such as these initiated from outside do not yet appear to reach the hearts of all people. Consequently, they did not really go well. The one project which was a good one—theological training—could not be continued because both churches had different thoughts and interests. The GKMO thought the school was too expensive. But our church, which is the larger of the two, wanted to preserve its own identity. That is why we need a spiritual center. The theological training center can bring that into being.

Ecumenism is broader than what goes on between two churches. What are the indications of becoming a part of the larger church of Indonesia?

That question keeps us busy at the GITJ. In 1984 we have to declare ourselves on this matter in the general assembly of the Council of Churches at Ambon. The Council of Churches wants to become a sort of church. Maybe that is possible, but the identity of the cooperating churches has to be guarded, and the individual churches need to have the opportunities to witness spiritually to others.

In 1978 the Minister for Religious Affairs issued a decree (SK 70) which restricted the possibilities for evangelism. How do you feel about evangelism in your country in the future?

When that decree was issued, the churches got really upset. The Council of Churches called a special meeting to talk about this issue. There was a lot of tension. But the decision was made to go together with the Catholic Church and take our griev-

ances to the authorities and to the President. Such a decree is not possible where the "Pancasila" (five pillars of the constitution) is in force. And we did receive an official interpretation of the Pancasila which clearly stated that the content of SK 70 contradicted the constitution. For that reason in 1979 a new decree was issued together with the Minister of Internal Affairs. The content of this one was that we are not permitted to force someone to change his or her religion. But we can certainly continue to witness and evangelize. Naturally, we were glad for this. We also thought that for the government to make a new ruling and then to change it is not consistent.

How is the development of theology within your church? Which points need special attention?

Unfortunately, I have not had the time quietly to pursue such studies. I hope that will be different in the future because I am much interested in doing that. Two matters need special attention:

1. Our situation is totally different from that in Europe and North America. We experience direct confrontation with world religions such as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. They form a lifestyle for our society. The people do not know why they do what they do and think as they think. The religious background of all this has become clouded. In the contemplation of what all this means, we are simply at the beginning as churches.

2. I would like to invite you to develop further the question of discipleship, the question of following Jesus in daily life. That fits well into our society. Ultimately, the Indonesians will have to do that, but now we have to do it together. Jesus is Guru (teacher), the one who acts and challenges us to follow him. I would like to think about and study that some more.

You have been in the Netherlands now for a month and have had opportunity to see our churches at close range. Could you mention some things that we should emphasize here?

That is difficult. I came to a country where people think deeply, and I came to learn. But it seems to me that you have people who have altogether too little knowledge of the Bible. Science and the scientific approach are keeping you people busy. You will have to find again a relationship to the Christian lifestyle. In Indonesia I received many valuable insights from the Bible when I had to work together with the authorities. I hope that you can find your way back again to the Bible. I believe church history has taught us about the relationship between progress and insight into the Bible.

Second, you people have too little of the simple faith. Faith is not something we receive only after we have worked through a lot of theology. After speaking in several churches here in the Netherlands, some people have said to me, "Pastor, you have really spoken differently." I preach simply; I pass on the ABCs of the faith by ordinary sermons about Jesus, the Word which has been made visible in the flesh, as John said. You people have to start preaching ordinary sermons again. Make it clear to the people that Jesus came really to help the people. Naturally, science and the scientific approach are good to improve the conditions of life, but they are good only when they come from the hand of God.

How should the cooperation between your church, the Mennonite Mission Board in Europe (EMEK), and MCC continue, and what should receive priority, given the fact that the goal is cooperation among independent, mature churches?

I am not yet satisfied with the cooperation. It is still too uneven. Many things have to be changed. Our side is still the side that needs help. Strange, but not nice, is the fact that I always have to come and ask for assistance. Actually, the cooperation should be like that between two disciples, both who have Jesus Christ as their teacher and leader. Both of us are disciples within the Anabaptist family. That has to be emphasized more. You will tell us that that will need to be emphasized among us, too. We used to learn that, but now we have forgotten it; we remember it as only something external. We want to cooperate with you in order that we can think together about the question, How do we put that doctrine into practice in Indonesia? Perhaps we can help you with doing that here in the West.

In conclusion, as you plan to step back as moderator of your church, what do you plan to do in the next years?

The first few months I will have to do a good bit of assisting. But I hope that I will also have time to read and study. I do not want to write a scientific work, but I do want to write a book which will tell about my experiences and my spiritual pilgrimage for the benefit of my congregation and my children. That which I have witnessed with my mouth I would now also like to have in print. To do this I hope to use the libraries in Pati, Salatiga, and Yogyakarta.

The Feast of Liberation of the Oppressed: A Rereading of John 7:1—10:21

HUGO ZORRILLA

Résumé of a doctoral thesis presented before the School of Theology of the Pontifical University of Salamanca, Spain: The dissertation is a study of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Samaritan challenge as fundamental milieu for understanding the theological message of the Fourth Gospel.

The study looks at John 7:1—10:21 from a triple perspective: (1) to underline the hypothesis that the Feast of Booths presents itself in John as a paradigm of liberation, (2) to show a messianic manifestation of Christ as a liberating substratum in the feast, which was a conditioning factor in the final editing of the text, and (3) to determine the challenge of the Samaritan heritage in the community as an important socioreligious substratum and as an aid for the missionary task of the church today.

Socioreligious approach to understanding John 7:1—10:21

The Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkah*), from Chaldea to Sinai, from Sinai to the Promised Land, was a witness of the

sociopolitical development of Israel.

In Exodus 23:16 the Feast of Booths is mentioned for the first time along with two other feasts of pilgrimages (Unleavened Bread and Harvest). Within the code of the covenant, it is placed at the end of the year and as an agricultural feast of a semi-sedentary people, rather than of nomadic herdsmen. The most important agricultural feast in the cultic life of Israel was first known as the Feast of the Gathering, the Feast of the Assembly, or the Feast of Yahweh. The cultic meaning and the historic value develop as follows: (1) Yahweh will drive out the nations from the presence of Israel, (2) their territory will be extended, and (3) no one will covet their land.

The feast and its historical installation

Deuteronomy 16:11-17 presents a social and historic development in the concept of the feast in such a way that the primary phase, the Feast of the Gathering, was seen as a celebration completely agricultural. Since the installation of the monarchy, the deuteronomist offers a historic interpretation of the Feast of Booths that, together with the feasts of Passover and Weeks, is structured as a cultic remembrance of the liberating acts of Yahweh for his people.

In summary:

(1) The solemnity was of a national character and of absolute rejoicing in a place where the glory of God was present (Deut. 16:11).

(2) The feast would be to remember that Israel had been slaves in Egypt (v. 12).

(3) For the first time the feast was called *hag hassukkot* (the Feast of Booths) (v. 13). .

(4) The people were instructed concerning the more precise liturgic time, "for seven days" (v. 13).

(5) The feast was to be genuinely joyful, and it was a national holiday of major participation (vv. 14-17).

The renovation of the covenant took place during the feast (Deut. 31:10-13). That act introduced an element of a social nature and another of a cultic character: (1) At the end of the sabbatical year when all Israel came before Yahweh for the feast, they should fulfill the instructions concerning rest for the land, liberty for the captives, and cancellation of debts. (2) Israel should read and hear the instruction of the Law, which is the base for what later rabbinical Judaism would develop into selections of the Torah to be read each day of the feast.

The feast and its insertion in the temples.

Numbers 29:12-39 establishes new aspects in the development of the feast. (1) The feast should be celebrated on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. (2) A list of sacrifices, offerings, and libations is given, and the sacrifice of a male goat is made each day for the atonement of sin. (3) Each day during the seven-day feast the number of bulls sacrificed would be in descending number from thirteen to seven. (4) The eighth day of the feast is added and becomes very reverent, "that great day of the feast" (Jn. 7:37).

In the inauguration of Solomon's temple, which was opposed by Jeroboam I, the feast obtained maximum social and cultic significance. First Kings 8:1-2 has the feast coincide with the consecration of Solomon's temple; after that it would be associated with the Davidic dynasty. The feast is a witness to the growing rivalry with the tribes from the north. Jeroboam instituted the feast for the purpose of annual rivalry with the feast in Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:32-33).

Leviticus 23:33-43 shows the feast with more cultic evolution, with the reign of Yahweh as the center. The symbolic content of the liberating history from Egypt was associated with dwelling in booths. From an agricultural feast it became a historical feast which had a great theological proximity with what centuries later would be seen in the Fourth Gospel.

The feast in the prophetic announcement

In the historic process of the feast, one can think of "theologization" for the purpose of prophetic denunciation and of eschatological announcement. The prophet Amos denounced the cultic irregularities of Israel who profaned the name of God in the autumn feasts, as did the Canaanite nations (Amos 2:2-16), and announced the judgment of God for the injustices committed against the just, the poor, and the helpless. Isaiah saw the glorious future of Jerusalem with symbols borrowed from the feast (Is. 4:6; 66:21-23). Ezekiel had a glimpse of the greatness of the future temple in the function of the booths (Ezek. 43:1-5; 47:1-9; Zech. 14:16-21).

The Feast of Booths and its symbology were important in the religious development of Israel. In order to understand John 7 to 10 one must understand the significance of the booths as an expression of a pilgrim people, in contrast to the temple of a sedentary people. For this reason, for John "the Verb became flesh and tabernacled among us" (Jn. 1:14). The water, the branches, the light, the psalms, the law, the sacrifices have meaning in the liberty announced by Jesus in the feast (Jn. 8:31).

The story of the transfiguration contains references to the booths (Mk. 9:2ff.), as does the account of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Mk. 11:1ff.; Jn. 12:1-12); in Revelation also reference is made to the feast (Rev. 7:9ff.; 21; 22). For John, Jesus personified the feast in the water, the light, the lamb, liberty, the booth.

Nevertheless, questions arise, such as: Why did Christianity of the first century after Christ not show much interest in this feast? Why did the Passover Feast take on more importance?

Tension and configuration with a Samaritan Christianity

To understand John with a historical perspective one must have in mind the social and theological development of the Samaritans in the missionary task of the church and its influence in Christianity of the first century. The little that is known of the Samaritans is through their enemies the Jews and through the pro-Jewish Christian exegesis. However, today many Samaritan texts and works by Samaritans are known; their theology and liturgy help in understanding the New Testament and lets them be known as subjects of their own history.

The primitive church had as a challenge the attitudes of Jesus toward non-Jewish people such as the Samaritans. These came to be representatives *par excellence* of everything that was hated by the Jews, yet Jesus dedicated months of his ministerial life to them, as can be deduced from the Gospels of John and Luke. The ministry of Jesus in Samaria is seen (Lk. 9:51-18:14; Jn. 5) as an anticipation and validation of the ministry of a persecuted church (Acts 6-8).

Samaritan inheritance

Johannine studies reveal a strong Samaritan vein which influenced the Christian community. In the Fourth Gospel this influence does not stop with chapter 4. It plays an important part in places such as Amon and Salim. Ephraim is witness to the clandestinity of Jesus when the Jews look for him to kill him (Jn. 11:54; 10:40). No doubt the Johannine community recognized the revolutionary ministry of John the Baptist. John places him in heterodox land. Possibly Jesus knew of this movement and that the community had followers of John the Baptist among its members (10:39-42; 1:35ff.).

The evangelist tries to show that the Samaritans (followers of the messianic prophet, Jesus), as well as the followers of John

the Baptist, had a common enemy, the repressive system of Judaism in Jerusalem, who considered them ignorant and cursed (Jn. 3:25; 7:49). The evangelist is interested in linking Galilee with Samaria in opposition to Judea. The theological pilgrimage of the Samaritans (Jn. 4) is a living contrast with the slowness of the teacher Nicodemus in understanding Jesus (Jn. 3). The Samaritans believed him, the Galileans received him, but the Jews looked for the opportunity to kill him. Jesus himself was the origin of the Christian ministry among the Samaritans, and one cannot study Samaritan Christianity without taking into account that Jesus acted as a liberating prophet among them, as the *Ta'eb* or Moses *redivivus*.

John tries to correct the concept the Christian Samaritans had of Jesus, that of a Mosiac prophet. Even before the Jews, the Samaritans were able to develop and to form a creed that served as a foundation for their beliefs and customs. The Samaritan creed consists of five well-defined articles, just as there are five books of Moses:

God is Lord. The character of God is profiled in light of the Exodus as the God who is making history with his people. This God frees the oppressed, his chosen ones, by way of his servants the patriarchs.

Moses is the prophet. Never has there been a prophet like him, ready to hear and to teach the people. He is established as a mediator between God and the people. When he is revealed again, he will reestablish the true worship in Mount Gerizim again.

The law of God. The Samaritans are the observers or the keepers of the law. They have long lives because of the observance of the five books of Moses. This law is the water of life, the deep water from a sweet fountain.

Gerizim is the holy mount. From it creation originated, and from its dust God created Adam. That is why Jacob said, "This is none other than the house of God" (Gen. 28:17).

The day of vengeance and recompense. At the coming of the *Ta'eb* God will recompense the faithful and will bring judgment to those who reject him. Moses will be raised again for this day of vengeance, according to the Samaritan interpretation of Deuteronomy 18:15ff. and 32:35. Thus, the Fourth Gospel, in a manner of correction, insists that Jesus is greater than Moses.

The Samaritan heritage in the feast

In the feast, Jesus not only denies the Mosaic character of circumcision and the attributes of the patriarchs (Jn. 7:22) but he assumes for himself all the liberator symbolism of the feast, such as the booth (the *skené*), light, water. In 7:37-39 Jesus offers himself as saving water and appears as the prophet, the one sent to do signs (7:40). The polemic in 7:40-44 in itself is Mosaic and Davidic. The evangelist seeks to define Christologically the development of the community in the way of faith. The Jews themselves recognize that Jesus not only opted for the people whom they considered cursed, but he was willing to be with and teach them.

Reflected in this text, the Johannine community is seen as a heterogeneous group risking their faith before Pharisaic intrigue. But this community takes the Samaritan sheep within its recesses to consolidate one flock (Jn. 10:16).

The controversy with the Jews continues to grow (Jn. 8:31ff.). After the Jews have argued that they are the seed of Abraham, Jesus accuses them of being sons of the devil. Jesus appears defending the ethnic paternity of Abraham against the Jews. The Jews are alluding that they are not born in fornication (8:41), the argument that they used against the Samaritans, who they considered idiots, "savage pigs, imbeciles."

The climax of the offense is in John 8:48 when the Jews classify Jesus as a Samaritan and as having a demon. This accusation identifies him with the Samaritan heretics. Jesus is not ashamed of the fornication connotations, illegitimacy, and contempt for the Samaritans that as people of the earth, the poor and the oppressed (*am ha-aretz*) in Judea and Galilee, they suffer the yoke of the Pharisee order. Jesus rejects the accusation that he has a demon but not that he is a Samaritan. For Jesus the Samaritan heresy is not as scandalous as the Jewish orthodoxy (8:56).

Messianic prophet: liberator from blindness

Upon reading the John 7:1—10:21 text again, questions arise. Why was Jesus looked to as a prophet? What does he do or say that emulates with someone like Moses? What tradition lies in the concept of the messianic prophet? Palestinian groups had a place for an eschatological prophet in their eschatology. This prophet would be powerful in word, with powers to do signs as Moses did. In the time of Jesus, people were certain that Messiah would take on functions of a liberating character, as Moses did. In the Fourth Gospel, and above all in 7:40, is a line of hope in a prophet such as Moses, as opposed to a prophet of the Davidic line (7:42).

On the other hand, Jesus appears as one greater than Moses, especially in the way that the Father is revealed and his signs are performed. The people sing of their liberation in the feast (Ps. 118:25; Jn. 12:13), and Jesus insists on his messiahship upon denouncing the Pharisaic blindness that leads to injustice and acts of death.

The structural analysis of John 7:1—10:21 will help untangle the theological intention of the feast and the identity of the community before the fear of the Jews. A systematic study of the story of the man blind from birth (9:1-41) serves as an example.

After situating Jesus in the Feast of Booths and identifying him as the light of the world, it is fundamental for the evangelist (narrator) to develop the miracle of the man blind from birth to whom Jesus gave life. All of John 9 is placed in such a way as to shed light on the whole structure of the feast (7:1—10:21) and is written with dramatic ability.

The miracle with its notes (Jn. 9:1, 6, 7) covers only three verses. The rest of the activity is the result of the miracle in the life of the characters. Also, it is important for the narrator that the readers consider the action of "opening the eyes" with the idea of receiving or recuperating sight (9:10, 14, 17, 21, 26, 30, 32).

All of John 9 is structured around this miracle and the identity of Jesus with various dialogues of the characters in the framework of the explanatory notes of the narrator. At the same time all is set in the liberating atmosphere of the feast and of the open repression of the Jews.

A. The miracle, vv. 1-7; first sequence where the intervention of the disciples and the neighbors is intercalated.
   1. Narrator—spatial location, v. 1; introduces the dialogue of the characters.
   2. Disciples—first dialogue, vv. 2-5.
   3. Narrator—description of the miracle, vv. 6-7.
   4. Neighbors—second dialogue, vv. 8-12.

B. Sabbatical polemic, vv. 13-17; second sequence in various acts as a result of the miracle.
   1. Narrator—special transfer, v. 13.
   2. Pharisees—explicative note, v. 14.

C. Synagogal confrontation, vv. 18-21.
   1. Narrator—ideological note, v. 18.
   2. Parents—fourth dialogue, vv. 19-21.

D. Ex-blind man confronted, vv. 22-34.

1. Narrator—ideological note, vv. 22-23.
2. Ex-blind man—fifth dialogue, vv. 24-34.
3. Jews—"Give glory to God," "We know this man is a sinner," v. 34b.
4. Narrator—ideological note, v. 34c.

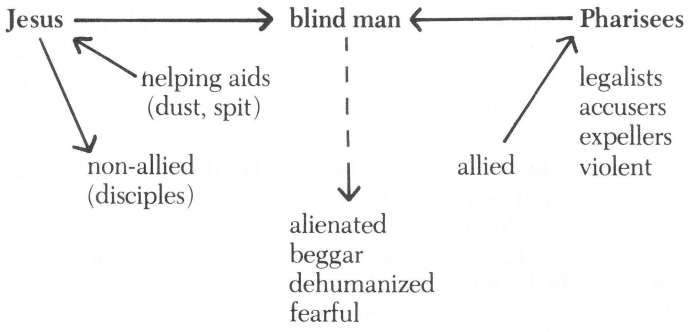
E. Dialogue of Jesus and the blind man, vv. 35-38.
1. Narrator—ideological-spatial note, v. 35.
2. Ex-blind man—sixth dialogue, vv. 35-38.

F. Judgment of Pharisees by Jesus, vv. 39-41.
1. Jesus—as administrator of justice, v. 39.
2. Narrator—ideological note, v. 40a.
3. Pharisees—self-sufficiently defend that they are not blind, v. 40b.
4. Jesus—dictates sentence against Pharisees who continue in sin, v. 41

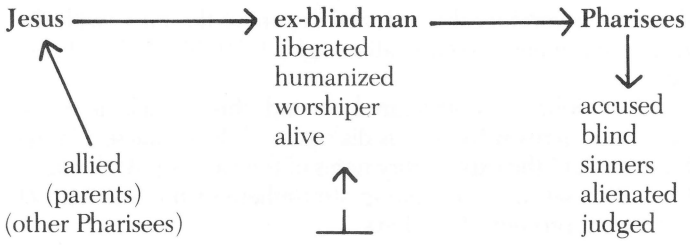
From the beginning of the account, the obstacle to conquer is blindness, the cause of alienation and dehumanization. The blind man enters impaired, and he leaves improved, while for his opponents (with their system of fear and repression) the opposite is true.

The miracle worker and the blind man begin together; then Jesus is silenced and the ex-blind man stands out in being liberated from blindness; they end together again in the account, showing at the same time the integral transformation of the man and the deterioration of the Pharisees.

First moment:



Second moment:



Without a doubt, the intention of the evangelist is to guide readers to discover the fulfillment of worship of the ex-blind man, parting from the corporal fulfillment. The recuperation of sight constitutes significant pairs with opposite meanings characterized, where Jesus appears as the operator of transformations, overcomer of obstacles, and the Jews appear as operators of deficiency, promoters of obstacles.

The results of the miracle establish opposite meanings:

ex-blind man:	Jesus	life	liberation	faith	encounter
	=	=	=	=	
	Pharisees	death	oppression	fear	expulsion

The account indicates the recovery of the oppressed by the work of Jesus, conquering the obstacles and Jewish opposition. The blind man manages a corporal action, a searching for and recuperation of sight. A persuasive fulfillment is also present: adoration in the ex-blind man. In the narration, fear and accusation play an important role, originated by the Jews as the antagonists. These sanctions alienate the oppressed person who, by the initative of the protagonist (Jesus), obtains dignity as a freed person. With the improvement of the blind man and in proportion to the obstacle overcome, the narrator contrasts the opinion that Jesus has of the ex-blind man with that of the Pharisees.

The confrontation with the Mosaic antagonists leads the blind man to see more in Jesus than just a prophet:

	Jesus	heard of God	comes from God	Lord
	=	=	=	
	Pharisees	not heard of God	come not from God	not Lord

The Pharisees' antagonism before the ex-blind man dignified for life in society is similar to that found in the adulterous woman not condemned. These conditions are overcome by Jesus as one greater than Moses (Jn. 9:29f.). The narrator points out the development of the opinion of the ex-blind man with respect to Jesus until he acknowledges his lordship (9:38).

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Hope Alive (Ephesians 2)

ROELF S. KUITSE

This is the third of a five-part series, "Mission and Hope," which was first presented at the Overseas Missions Seminar of Mennonite Board of Missions in June 1980. Roelf S. Kuitse has been a missionary, educator, and pastor in the Netherlands, Indonesia, West Africa, and the USA. He served as director of the Mission Training Center, Elkhart, Indiana, from 1979-82 and teaches there now.

Paul's epistle to the Ephesians is an epistle about the church and about Christ as the head of the church. This epistle has played an important role in the discussion about the church in relation to the world. Is the church a function of God's mission to the world, or is mission a function of the church as body of Christ?

We'll confine ourselves to the second chapter of this epistle. In the reflections about Luke 24 (see "Expectant Memory" in *Mission Focus*, March 1985) we have dealt with the basis of the Christian hope. Ephesians 2 can help us in discovering the way of the Christian hope.

Many books have been published about Paul's letter to the Ephesians. I have received much help from the two-volume commentary written by Markus Barth (1974), who also wrote about this epistle in his book *The Broken Wall* (1959).

You, we, God (Ephesians 2:1-10)

In Ephesians 2:1-10 Paul writes about the change in the life of the readers and himself ("you" . . . "we") through the creative work of God. In different ways (vv. 1-3, NEB) he describes human existence before salvation: they "were dead in . . . sins and wickedness," "followed the evil ways," "obeyed the commander of the spiritual powers of the air," "lived . . . in sensuality," "obeyed the promptings of . . . instincts and notions." This paints a gloomy picture. Evil powers from outside and from inside dominate human life. "We . . . lay under the dreadful judgment of God" (v. 3). There is no future, no hope.

Paul does not always speak or write in such negative ways about pagan life. The approach to people of other religions is an important subject in missionary thinking. Like Paul in Ephesians 2, some people speak about these religions in an absolute, negative way. Others, however, try to discern the work of God in other religions; they point to Paul's way of dealing with this subject in Acts 17 and Romans 2.

Over against this gloomy picture of the past in the life of the Ephesians Paul puts the present. The change is the gift and work of God. It is not human effort. Three different words are used to characterize the motive of God's action: mercy, love, and grace. On the human side there is only darkness (vv. 1-3). People can boast of nothing before God. The new situation in human existence as a result of God's mercy, love, and grace is described as "life with Christ," "saved," "God's handiwork," "created in Christ Jesus to devote ourselves to the good deeds for which God has designed us" (vv. 4-10).

Paul uses the analogy of the resurrection and ascension of Christ to write about the change in human life: God "raised us up and enthroned us with him in the heavenly realms" (v. 6). The future has started already for the saints. Living in the world, they are citizens of heaven (see also Eph. 2:19-22). They are "closer to heaven and more firmly established there now than theater-goers who have reserved tickets in their pockets and wait for admission" (Barth).

This changed new life is a life in tension, the tension of living in the world as citizens of another world. Christians can easily be pulled in one of two different directions. Emphasis can be put on "being citizens of heaven," but the danger here is escapism, turning one's back to the world and thereby forgetting that Christ was crucified **for** this world. The emphasis can also be put on this world and life in this world. The danger here is accommodation to the world and forgetting that Christ was crucified **by** the world.

Salvation is from Satan and for God, from the past and for the future. We are a new creation in Christ—a new creation for good works as an expression of the new life, a new life for the future in which "immense . . . resources of his grace" will be displayed (Eph. 2:17). This future has started already; hope has been realized in the new creation of God—changed lives, the new community—about which Paul writes in the next passage.

The broken wall (Ephesians 2:11-16)

This passage is the key to the whole epistle to the Ephesians. It starts with a description of the division of humankind, the division between Israel and the "nations." The nations are characterized in different ways: in relation to Israel they are regarded as the uncircumcised, strangers to the community of Israel, outside God's covenants. In relation to Christ they are separate from Christ. In relation to God they are without hope, without God, immersed in this world (vv. 11-13).

Verse 13 starts with the words: "But now in union with Christ Jesus. . . ." What seemed impossible—to bridge the gap that divided the human family—has been realized in Christ. A totally new situation has been created. God has "made the two one," "broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between them," created "out of the two a single new humanity"; through Christ, "both alike have access to the Father in the one Spirit" (vv. 14-18).

How has this new situation been created? What was the price paid for the peace, for the breaking of the wall? What was the means of reconciliation between the hostile parts of the human family? Different words are used to describe the price that has been paid: "through the shedding of Christ's blood," "in his own body of flesh and blood" (vv. 13-14). The peace is peace in the Messiah; he is the peace (v. 14). Through him the Gentiles—the nations—are not excluded anymore. In him Jew and Gentile find each other in union with Christ, in a new body, a new community.

Jesus is priest and sacrifice; he gives himself for the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile for the reconciliation of both with God. His reach is universal. That is why the good news is proclaimed by the apostles to those who are far away and those who are near (v. 17). This good news is the news about the new humanity in Christ, the new body in which reconciliation takes place.

God's house(hold) (Ephesians 2:17-22)

Paul uses two images in speaking about the fruits of reconciliation. The first image is the new humanity. The second image is

house or household. The Gentiles are no longer strangers and sojourners, aliens in a foreign land, but people that belong to the household of God where God is the Father and Jews and Gentiles are brothers and sisters.

From the house—understood as family or community—Paul makes a transition to the house as building. The members of the household become the building materials of a house in which God lives in and through the Spirit. The building has a foundation of apostles and prophets. Without the witness of apostles and prophets the message about the one who made peace would not have reached the Gentiles. No church is possible without the prophetic and apostolic witness. The house, the building, is growing and is not yet finished. This growth attests to the presence of God. Gentiles and Jews are growing together on the basis of prophetic and apostolic preaching and with the destination to meet in and with Christ, the keystone.

The church—hope alive

The church is not only the community of people who are hoping and who impart a message of hope in the world. The church is a community in which hope has taken shape, a community in which is foreshadowed what God's future will be, a community in which the future has started already. That is why Markus Barth speaks about an "ecclesiology of hope." That means that mission is not only action or activities. It is also being. The church in a divided world demonstrates the accomplished reconciliation, a demonstration of walls broken in and through Christ. Hope is realized in a new community, a foretaste of the world to come. Activities do not help or save us when this awareness of the new, reconciled humanity is lacking.

In our missions we sometimes face the danger of a triumphalistic ecclesiology. The church seems to be the alpha and the omega. Paul speaks about the church in the light or context of God, the Lord (Christ), the Spirit (especially in Eph. 2:19-22). The church represents the world before God in praise and intercessory prayer; the church represents God in the world ("a house where God lives").

Ephesians 2 also speaks about growth. This does not refer to numerical, external growth nor to individual, spiritual growth and development. It is the growth into a holy temple "so as to be a dwelling place for God." It is the growth as community to become what it is: the new humanity in Christ. The church is not the end of the road. There is no reason for complacency. The growth continues. Christ is not only the basis or foundation of the hope; Christ is also the keystone, the hope of the church.

"You too are being built with all the rest into a spiritual dwelling for God" (v. 22). That is amazing! Christ is in the house of Zacchaeus! God is dwelling among people! That is described as a feature of the new heaven and earth in Revelation 21. Hope is realized in the new community, the new humanity. That God dwells among his people does not say anything about the goodness or excellence of this people; it tells us something about the goodness and grace of the holy God who is not ashamed to dwell among human beings and to use weak persons for his purpose. That gives hope to the church in its mission to and in the world.

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In review

From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya. By Ruth A. Tucker. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983, 512 pp., $14.95 (pb).

God's Commissioned People. By M. Thomas Starkes. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1984, 363 pp., $11.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Peter M. Hamm

For at least two reasons new histories of missions must be written. Since missions is continually expanding its horizons, new stories need to be told to reflect the ever-growing worldwide impact. Moreover, new research is likewise uncovering stories which long since should have been told but have not been on account of oversight, prejudice, or failure to recognize the significant.

Since Starkes' *God Commissioned People* and Tucker's *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* meet these requirements, they constitute a welcome addition to a popular history of Christian missions. Both volumes warrant being added to a church library or an introductory reading list at a junior college or Bible institute. However welcome their publication, they also have their limitations.

The common features of these two volumes are to be expected. Both seek to update the history of missions, especially in its post-World War II contribution. Both identify current issues in missions and dare to look to the future. Both concentrate upon the evangelical contribution of recent decades which more sophisticated histories have sometimes omitted.

Starkes scarcely recognizes the World Council of Churches (WCC) contribution, allowing more space to Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center (MARC) than to WCC, and Tucker in her final chapter on "New Methods and Strategy" is singularly selective by including Kenneth Strachan, Bob Pierce, Brother Andrew, Donald McGavran, Ralph Winter, and Don Richardson to the exclusion of those who may have represented the conciliar churches. Both, consequently, are guilty of oversimplifications. For example, Starkes fails to recognize an exciting chapter of current missions history since 1980 by stating, "The Soviet takeover in Afghanistan in 1980 has made Christian missions there virtually nonexistent." Both volumes are basically descriptive, recording experiences, facts, and events, but fall short on interpretive history.

Perhaps a better comparison is made by noting some differences which make these popular histories complementary. As for format, Starkes' shorter history is in large print with bold headings and simple chapter divi-

sions. While it contains helpful time lines, it has but a few pictorial maps and no illustrations or charts. To facilitate its use as a text, it enumerates principles, distinctions, and contributions in summary form. A few questions complete each of its nine chapters. It augments a limited bibliography by including significant titles in the text itself. The book has virtually no documentation.

Tucker's longer volume with small print in two columns per page is decidedly more textbookish. Its eighteen chapters are carefully divided into five parts, each reflecting major eras in the history of mission. Her work is documented well and contains a helpful, selected bibliography for each chapter. Moreover, the book is well illustrated with maps, charts, and pictures.

More significant than the difference in format is the difference in content. With his Southern Baptist bias, Starkes is careful to record the contributions of his own church, however, not to the exclusion of others. Mennonites will be pleased to see Menno Simons, Balthasar Hubmaier, Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and Michael Sattler included for their missionary contributions during the Reformation. Starkes includes also sectarian contributions of Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and Moonies, and attempts to recognize the contributions of Roman Catholics. In addition, he identifies the new era of 1984—post colonial, Third World church-centered, focused upon the unreached—all within the milieu of religious pluralism. His valiant attempt to cover so much ground in so brief a compass suffers from a lack of depth and a failure to interpret.

Tucker's biographical history, if biased, would be to her Christian and Missionary Alliance orientation. Each of the eighteen chapters is devoted to a particular theme or activity in the history of mission—linguistics, radio, aviation, martyrs, Third World missions, "faith" missions. Her focus is not upon the record of facts, but upon the human struggle, emotion, adventure, and tragedy. Here the biography of individuals links the portrayal of history. What makes her story fresh is to hear not only about classical heroes of history but those commonly overlooked (one chapter devoted to women only). In its up-to-dateness it includes not only the story of Chet Bitterman of Colombia and John Troyer of Guatemala but also Festo Kivengere, Luis Palau, and Philip Teng. Indeed, the two volumes together make for an inspiring and readable updating of the ever-incomplete history of missions.

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Comparative Chronology of Protestantism in Asia, 1792-1945. By Institute of Asian Cultural Studies. Tokyo: International Christian University, 1984, 189 pp., ¥8000 (pb).

Reviewed by Wilbert R. Shenk

In terms of formal structure this work is organized chronologically by years, beginning with 1792 and the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society in Great Britain, and arranged in columns: Japan, Korea, China, Indonesia/Philippines, India, and West. Each year is further divided into "Christian" and "General." The compilers have combed Christian and general history for significant decisions, events, and personalities which have shaped Protestant Christianity in Asia.

At first glance this may appear to be an overly simplistic approach. But as Professor Cho explains in her important Preface, the decision to compile this *Chronology* around 1960 was tied up with the desire to understand the impact of Christianity on Asia and particularly its role in the modernization movement in China and Japan.

The *Chronology* would seem to focus attention on discrete events and personalities. But this is defended as the details which help to explain the working out of the central dynamic of the missionary movement among Protestants. Particular attention is paid to revival movements which periodically gave new energy and verve to the missionary cause.

The richest portions of the *Chronology* are those pertaining to Japan and China. Other countries and regions are under-represented by comparison. This is a mine of facts and figures. One will have to turn elsewhere for bibliography of the works on which this has been based.

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The Jew and the Christian Missionary: A Jewish Response to Missionary Christianity. By Gerald Sigal. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1981, 311 pp., $20.00.

Christianity and Judaism: The Deepening Dialogue. Edited by Richard W. Rousseau, S.J. Scranton, Pa.: Ridge Row Press, 1983, 217 pp., $16.75 (pb).

Reviewed by Gerald Gerbrandt

Ever since New Testament times the relationship between Christianity and Judaism has been strained at best. Both of these books speak to this relationship, albeit in different ways and with different purposes.

Sigal attempts to refute the theological claims of what he calls the "Christian missionary movement." This is done by systematically examining those biblical passages commonly used within this movement (although not only by this movement) to support its claims: Genesis 3:15 is not messianic; Isaiah 7:14 does not speak of a virgin; Jesus does not fulfill Psalm 110:1, 4; and so on.

The result is sixty-eight short chapters emphasizing that Jesus was not the Messiah, that he cannot be seen as divine, and that the New Testament is full of error and contradiction. The objective here is a defensive one. Few, however, will be persuaded by this book.

Rousseau, on the other hand, is actively promoting increased dialogue between Judaism and Christianity. Relations between these two have significantly improved since World War II, but this is only a beginning. Much more dialogue can and needs to take place. Toward this end Rousseau has gathered together these fifteen previously published articles. In a helpful introduction he summarizes each one and attempts to systematize the "threads of consensus" among the authors.

To consider all of the articles in a brief review is impossible, but a few require attention. The tone for the book is set in the first article by A. Roy Eckardt: "Christians and Jews: Along a Theological Frontier." Eckardt argues that "the effort to convert Jews to Christianity is identifiable as a veiled attack, perhaps unknowingly, upon the Christian faith itself" (p. 34), and that "Jewish non-acceptance of Jesus as Messiah remains among the most sublime and heroic instances of Israel's faithfulness to her covenant with God" (p. 33).

One exception to this approach is the article by Stephen T. Davis: "Evangelical Christians and the Holocaust." He counters that evangelicals consider themselves to be under the biblical mandate to witness, and these will "insist that they be free to preach the gospel to Jews as well as other people" (p. 114).

A Jewish perspective is helpfully provided by Henry Siegman: "A Decade of Catholic-Jewish Relations—A Reassessment." He draws attention to the rather different agenda and approaches with which Jews and Christians come to the dialogue. Whereas Jews tend to want to focus on the history of Jewish-Christian interaction, Christians prefer to talk about theology and truth. Edward Flannery ("Response to Henry Siegman") basically supports Siegman's analysis but emphasizes that the concerns of both sides should then be included in the dialogue.

The majority of the articles in the set come

from church administrators rather than theologians or academics. This results in a book which frequently touches on the key theological issues (mission to the Jews, relationship of Old Testament to New Testament, the anti-Jewishness of the New Testament) but with inadequate depth and insight. At a number of points the problems could have been resolved or the positions strengthened a solid biblical theology.

One article which rises above this general tendency comes from Isaac C. Rottenberg: "Fulfillment Theology and the Future of Christian-Jewish Relations." He clearly points out that "the emphasis on New Testament fulfillment theology is on foretaste, not on full realization . . ." (p. 66).

On the whole this is a stimulating collection of articles on a topic requiring sensitive yet thorough attention. One senses from all of the authors a true desire to understand and to contribute to the dialogue. One hopes that some of the theological issues can be dealt with more helpfully in further books.

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Arabier en christen: christelijke kerken in het Midden-Oosten. By Anton Wessels. Baarn, The Netherlands: Ten Have, 1983, 236 pp., fl.27.75 (pb).

Reviewed by Roelf Kuitse

This book, written in Dutch, deals with the ancient Christian churches in the Middle East. The writer has taught for many years at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut and is now professor of mission at the Free University in Amsterdam.

The churches in the Middle East are important parts of the family of churches for several reasons. First, they are the most ancient churches in the world. Their history goes back to the first centuries. Ancient traditions have been preserved, especially in the liturgies of these churches. The liturgical life has been of great importance in the life and survival of these communities.

Second, since the seventh century these churches have lived in a world dominated by Islam. They are protected minorities, without the freedom to evangelize. While churches in North Africa have not survived the encounter with Islam, others in Egypt and the Middle East have been able to survive that struggle. In this survival the liturgical life of the church has played a predominant role.

Third, attention should be paid to the Christian communities in the Middle East because of the difficult situation in which they find themselves at present. The process of decolonization, the creation of the state of Israel, the fundamentalistic revival of Islam, and the impact of the intervention of Western powers in the Middle East have all contributed to this new and difficult situation.

The last chapter of Wessels' book focuses on the question whether the churches in the Middle East still have a future. Many Christians (Jacobites, Assyrians, Armenians) emigrate to other countries. The Maronites in Lebanon continue in their often violent attempts to preserve their identity against the Muslims and not to become subjected to Islamic rule. The Greek Orthodox try to overcome a ghetto existence by engaging in the life and struggle of their Islamic neighbors. These are different responses to a similar situation, and the future lies with the last response, the response of positive engagement.

The world of the churches in the Middle East is unknown to the majority of Christians in the Western world. The author introduces readers to the different churches: Jacobites, Assyrians (Nestorians), Maronites, Copts, Armenians, and Greek Orthodox. He also pays attention to the role and influence of Roman Catholic and Protestant missions. Much has been done in the fields of education, medical care, and social welfare. Yet there are also—with the lack of understanding for the position of the ancient churches—harsh judgments, uncritical cooperation with Western powers, competition, and division. The author writes about the influence of Western churches in one of the last chapters of his book. Other chapters deal with the church(es) in Iran, the church(es) in Israel, and the relation of church and Islam.

The purpose of this review of a Dutch book is to rouse interest for our sisters and brothers in the Middle East. Good introductions in the English language are the work of Aziz S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity* (London: Methuen, 1968); the two-volume collection of essays edited by A. J. Arberry, *Religion in the Middle East: Three Religions in Concord and Conflict* (London: Cambridge, 1969); and a new book by John Joseph, *Muslim-Christian Relations and Inter-Christian Rivalries in the Middle East: The Case of the Jacobites in an Age of Transition* (State University of New York Press, 1983).

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The Biblical Foundations for Mission. By Donald Senior, C.P., and Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983, 384 pp., $25.00 ($14.95, pb).

Reviewed by Victor Adrian

The Biblical Foundations for Mission by Roman Catholic scholars is a rather substantive, biblical, theological study of God's mission and the mission of the church in the world.

Sensitive to the post-World War II explosion of the church in Third World countries, the authors probe thoroughly the biblical foundations for the church's universal mission—"to all nations." This call to universalism, they maintain, causes the church to struggle with liberation theology, the challenge of global justice and peace, the pluralism in dogma and praxis, dialogue with non-Christian religions, and the emergence of new forms of ministry.

The authors believe that if the heart of the biblical message is to be discovered, the Bible must be studied from the vantage point of mission (p. 4).

Over one third of the book is devoted to the Old Testament. Stuhlmueller detects a significant number of signals of God's universal concern for all people throughout the old covenant. He observes a repetitive cycle in Israel's history, beginning with (a) a breakthrough of a new idea or a new people in the midst of struggle, (b) an acculturation process of the new idea, and (c) a prophetic challenge (p. 39).

Some important interesting insights emerge in the discussion. One is the widespread awareness of God's intention of world mission in the tradition of prayer in the Old Testament, particularly in the hymns of praise. These express a clear appreciation of God's concern for the Gentiles and his vision of world mission, as, for example, in Psalm 22:27:

> *All the ends of the earth*
> *will remember and turn to the Lord,*
> *and all the families of the nations*
> *will bow down before him,*
> *for dominion belongs to the Lord*
> *and he rules over the nations.*

The mission theology of Paul receives particular attention and is regarded as "the most profound and most systematic of the universal Christian vision" (p. 161). A good point emphasizes that Paul was not a mere evangelizer, spreading the Word, but a church planter, seeking to develop churches and Christian communities. He continued to exercise great anxiety for the spiritual vitality and growth of the local churches he had founded. He kept in close touch with them, engaging in

considerable efforts of pastoral care.

While this book has some helpful insights, it also has some liabilities. Throughout the book the concept of mission appears to be defined not in terms of the biblical foundations and the biblical mandate but in terms of contemporary perspectives which have departed from the biblical foundations. The following definition serves to make this explicit:

> *By "mission" in this book we mean the God-given call to appreciate and share one's religious experience and insights, first within one's own community and tradition, and then within the people and communities of other cultural, social, and religious traditions. . . . Such a notion means that mission is two-way: faith is shared but not imposed, and the missionary will be instructed and enriched by discovering God's salvation already at work in the people and culture to whom he or she is sent. . . . The gospel bearer must be aware that he or she is not the proprietor of all truth but bears a gift of God's salvation that, in many ways, the non-Christian has already experienced* (p. 3).

Such perspectives confuse the biblical concept of mission and the biblical concept of salvation. It tones down the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and does not regard Scripture as authoritative and normative for our understanding of mission today. This perspective is further elucidated in the conclusion of the writers when they say:

> *Instead of seeing "pagan" religions as aberrations, many Christians now acknowledge that for millions of people these systems provide genuine experiences of salvation. Instead of dismissing them as temporary obstructions to the triumph of the gospel, Christians may have to consider the proper role of other religions in the global salvation history of humanity. Instead of seeing mission as ultimately geared to proselytizing and conversion, Christians may also have to think of a dialectic between the good news of the gospel and the good news of another religious story* (p. 346).

What then are the biblical foundations which the authors would like to retain? They suggest the following:

1. The sovereignty of God and his will to save humanity.

2. The belief that God acts in and through history to carry out his intention. In the discussions on this foundation the authors want to see the sacred in secular trends and events, in the history of people outside of Israel or the church, in order to discover God and his Spirit at work in the lives of people who have never made an explicit commitment to Christ.

3. The third mission foundation is the perspective that a theology of mission flows from the doctrine of creation. Moving from the Old Testament to the New Testament, particularly the books of Colossians and Ephesians, the writers indicate the cosmic intents of God's mission and salvation.

4. The final foundation for mission is seen in the dynamic of religious experience (p. 329). The encounter of individuals—and God's people corporately—with God in the Old and New Testament indicates the importance of religious experience in shaping the mission of the church.

Victor Adrian, Winnipeg, Manitoba, is General Secretary for Mennonite Brethren Missions and Services.

The Church and the National Security State. By José Comblin. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1979, 256 pp., $12.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Urbane Peachey

"The theology of liberation is very much situated in the political and economic realities of the poor, colonialized people of Latin America. I do not think such a theology can be directly pertinent to any North American, to any educated middle class citizen of the industrialized West."

This arresting declaration is typical of José Comblin's most useful work on a theology of revolution. He covers the complex historical themes of church and state in Latin America with clarity, relying on his many years in Latin America and his skill in European academic theology. The Latin-American experience brought about a conversion of Comblin's "whole existence—my intellectual process, my values, my understanding of life and especially my priorities" (p. xi). Comblin discovered two kinds of Christianity. One kind supported the injustice of the social and political structures; the other kind struggled for justice and liberation.

Comblin begins by describing Western theology as "formal," "academic," "scientific," and "isolated" from "real knowledge." "Its universalism is abstract and unreal . . . and so it fails to disclose what God's presence means in the world today" (p. 5).

Theology with the "wrong" words is often concerned with the chief problems of the time; the "right theology" is often a silent theology. Comblin says, for example, that liberation theology lacks a serious scientific analysis in the historical knowledge of church history and biblical exegesis. Some other theologies are right in their doctrine, but they remain silent about the social domination of the world by small, powerful minorities.

The structure or theme for this book is a "theology of revolution." But Comblin hastens to say that he does not seek a theology that supports a particular political party or a theology that would decide which liberation movement to support.

The theology of revolution is a movement toward the future which seeks a transformation of society. The Bible and history show that Christianity has always been concerned with church-state relationships. But present theology remains superficial on the subject, says Comblin. He wants a dynamic theology arising out of the social process and not a theology that simply fortifies static self-serving political structures.

The most important aspect of this book is the relationship of the church to the national security state and the forces in society which support it. The author reviews the well-known power disparities of Latin-American countries and examines the dualism in the Latin-American church—"being simultaneously for the establishment of power and for the revolution" (p. 50). But Comblin is clear that he intends to work within the church structure. He does not accept the secular voice that thinks the church, *ekklesía*, is out-of-date.

The national security state determines the validity of citizen groups, their purposes, and their activities in terms of how they support or distract from state goals. National security goals are established for the purpose of maintaining power or staying in office, not to serve the people. The welfare of the citizens is not a priority. Public and private institutions, including the church, are easily suspect by the government if their values counter the priorities of the state.

"The authors of the national security ideology are not aware of any contradiction between their theories and Christianity" (p. 79). To the contrary, the church is expected to help stabilize the state security system. Government authorities are therefore scandalized by the lack of enthusiasm of dissenting bishops, priests, and lay people. The state expects the church and the armed forces to collaborate to fight communism and to build a new society.

North American readers may have difficulty understanding this unless they understand the historic union of church and state in Latin America. Those who applaud the drive against communism should recall that in some places in Latin America dissent is quickly labeled as leftist or communist. This is greatly different

from most Western democracies that tolerate a broader spectrum of public debate. Viewpoints or social programs labeled as communist in Latin America would often be considered as democracy at work in North America.

The church in Latin America does not appreciate this state pressure, even though the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy is also committed to the struggle against communism. Military governments have ecclesiastical counselors who help to write political documents so that they appeal to the churches. "Never, since the independence of the Latin American nations, has Christian language been used as it is presently by the military governments" (p. 80).

In responding to this pressure the church has taken its own initiative through evangelism. "Evangelization is the radical expression of the nature of the church and Christianity, and is exactly what national security excludes" (p. 87). Evangelism also expresses the opposition of the Roman Catholic Church to revolutionary movements and ideologies such as those which dominated leftist movements in Latin America from 1959 to 1973 (p. 86.) The church hierarchy has been determined that the content of Christianity should not be used as an instrument of political action.

But, says Comblin, danger also exists in the present national security systems. This evangelism concept also allows us to step beyond the old distinctions between "spiritual," "religious," or "temporal." Evangelism is a way of integrating life and theology. It is not a return to dualism. "From such a viewpoint political realities do not . . . remain outside the action of the church" (p. 87). Comblin, summarizing from Roman Catholic documents, describes evangelization as follows: (1) evangelization is a method of action opposed to violence, and (2) the church, in its evangelistic task, cannot collaborate with any political party in its conquest for power.

Comblin is looking for new understandings in the Bible and church history and in contemporary reflection of practicing Christians in Latin America. Romans 13, he says, calls the state to serve, not to rule. The author believes the Bible assigns government the task of ordering society, but government authority must be subject to the people served.

José Comblin chooses the language of revolution rather than liberation because he is emphasizing social transformation through participation and not only a change in unjust power structures. The definitions are, however, more important than the terms. Comblin assumes the need to work within religious and political structures. He accepts the need for compromise so the church can survive in society. The pastoral task of the church is suggested by this discussion. "Martyrdom is not the totality of the church's mission. . . . At this moment, in Brazil, Paraguay, in Bolivia, Uruguay, in Chile, in Central America (with certain exceptions) there is practically no bishop, pastor, priest or active lay person who is not living this dilemma in his or her daily Christian mission" (p. 173). This dilemma is referred to as "the captivity of the church."

Comblin speaks to the historical debate about the Christian's responsibility for the outcome of society. Some would not accept Comblin's statement that "the church wants a society based on Christian ethical principles, according to the Gospels and papal encyclicals" (p. 80).

But the popular theology of political realism is even less satisfactory. The transformation concept provides a better framework for a discussion of the modern social and political dilemma.

Separatists, concerned about maintaining a strong concept of the church, step back from the discussion because they fear the church will become compromised or politicized. Dualists, such as those in the Lutheran position, give the princes or the hangman free hand under the sovereignty of God. Some are preoccupied with the Constantinian temptation and therefore cannot speak specifically to the times. The theology of social transformation offers a better framework for the discussion about the church and society.

Comblin's theology would have been strengthened had he given more attention to a theology of the kingdom, a believers' church, and the biblical passages dealing with Christ and the powers. He covers obvious passages, such as Romans 13 and Galatians 3:24, and he has a strong section on a covenant people. But the overarching themes of creation, covenant, justice, redemption, kingdom, and church form the foundation and the essence for a theology of revolution or a concept for social transformation. Comblin's strategy is rooted in the people, not in elitist answers or power structures remote from the poor. "Thus a strategy of liberation adopted enthusiastically by the church as a whole could bring together the major part of the nations."

Urbane Peachey, Akron, Pennsylvania, is Executive Secretary for Peace Section of Mennonite Central Committee.

Faces of Jesus: Latin American Christologies. Edited by José Miguez Bonino. Translated by Robert R. Barr. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984 (originally published in 1977 as *Jesus: Ni veneido ni monarca celestial* by Tierra Nueva, SRL, Buenos Aires, Argentina), 186 pp., $10.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Henry Poettcker

José Miguez Bonino, the editor of this series of twelve essays, is Professor of Systematic Theology at Institut Superior Evangelico de Estudios Teologicos in Buenos Aires; he is a member of the Presidium of the World Council of Churches and a leading Protestant theologian in Latin-America.

The essays have been grouped into four parts. Part I focuses on identifying the Christologies that have been present in Latin America over the years. In Part II the writers look at how these experiences of Christ have actually functioned for people.

Part III deals with Christ and politics. What are the political overtones of Jesus' view of freedom movements (Zealots) or of his trial and execution? The Latin American writers see considerable relevance for this type of study for their own critical situation. What does the interpretation of the biblical text say to the witness of the church in that setting?

That this would quickly raise the issue of hermeneutics is only too obvious, and so the final three essays in Part IV focus on the "deeper hermeneutical problem." What are the guidelines by which one undertakes interpretation, or what is the hermeneutical key which can unlock the biblical themes and let them speak to a current situation? If one is willing to respect both the original setting and the reader's setting—"a hermeneutics incorporating careful exegesis and historical-social analysis"—then one will experience "the reserve of meaning" which the biblical text wants to convey.

A careful reading of these chapters leaves one with several impressions. The writers have a strong desire to be obedient to God, and each in his own way raises the question of the church's role in Latin America for today. They are compelled by the urgency of the hour, when hundreds of people are dying by the oppressor's hand. They are taking theology seriously. The interpretations of many of the popular Christ images too often allow oppression to go on. Hence it is essential to lay bare the false theology (Christology) which seems to create a barrier between the gospel and the oppressed.

Several of the writers speak appreciatively of some good features of preaching and praxis. Christ has become personal for many people.

His living reality transforms lives and reawakens a meaning of one's existence. But over against those whose lives have been touched in this way are many more for whom the Santa Claus Christ image, or the Beggar Christ, or the Passport Christ, or the Guerrilla Christ is only detrimental, for these images portray someone who is not found in the Gospels. Hence a radical corrective is needed.

Certainly some serious questions are to be raised in several of the essays as these relate both to the picture of Jesus in the Gospels and to the method used to draw forth what is understood as the New Testament message. (Bonino acknowledges that the choice of the essays was not made on the basis of orthodoxy.) A critical reading is necessary.

One encouraging feature of a collection such as this is evidence of solid biblical exegesis and of indigenous theology from believers in Latin America. More than ten years ago a theologian from the Orient told this reviewer that until the preachers and theologians in that setting stopped borrowing Western theologies and began to let the biblical message speak through interpreters out of that setting, the church would not understand and execute its mission adequately.

As the mission task becomes more and more a joint effort, we must learn to know and understand the sociological, cultural, economic, political, and theological factors which create the context in which our brothers and sisters understand and articulate the biblical faith. In light of their willingness to carry their witness in the face of suffering and death, we must conclude that we have much to learn from their insights and their praxis.

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The Idols of Death and the God of Life: A Theology. Edited by Pablo Richard. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1983, 232 pp., $12.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Hugo Zorrilla

The clamor of the poor continues to be heard in the world, underscoring the importance of the fresh and current theme in *The Idols of Death and the God of Life: A Theology*. The search for the true God of the Bible in the mission of the church demands the unmasking of social, political, and religious structures in order to expose the gods that create oppression and death.

From Mexico to Argentina this group of ten writers discussed and "did theology" with other Christians from Central America at the outset of this decade. This is the collective work of biblicists, theologians, pastors, and sociologists. Originally titled *The Struggle of the Gods: The Idols of Oppression and the Search for the Liberating God*, Richard's book begins with the theology of the Old Testament and carries its unifying theme through Christology and the experience of God at the grass-roots community level to focus on idolatry from a political and economic perspective.

The articles are: "Biblical Theology of Confrontation with Idols" by Pablo Richard, "The Gods of Oppression" by Severino Croatto, "Divine Judgment in History" by George Pixley, "The Epiphany of the God of Life in Jesus of Nazareth" by Jon Sobrino, "The God of the Strategic Covenant" by Victorio Araya, "The Task of Making God Exist" by Joan Casañas, "Meditation and the God of the Poor" by Javier Jiménez Limón, "God Bursts Forth in the Experience of Life" by Frei Betto, "The Economic Roots of Idolatry—Entrepreneurial Metaphysics" by Franz Hinkelammert, and "The Faith of the Poor in Their Struggle with Idols" by Hugo Assmann.

The validity of the topics mentioned is clear when, four years after the preparation of this work, the clamor of the poor continues to be heard in the world.

Hugo Zorrilla, Madrid, Spain, is a missionary serving with Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions/Services.

The Great Omission. By Robertson McQuilkin. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984, 103 pp., $4.95 (pb).

Reviewed by William Block

This book is both an explanation for "the great omission" and a plea for missionaries.

McQuilkin gives five reasons for the "Great Omission" among American evangelicals: (1) preoccupation with self-love and lack of vision, (2) a failure to see God as primarily a missionary God, (3) a lack of conviction that people are lost without Christ, (4) a great lack of prayer, and (5) a lack of recognition of WHO is calling, and therefore a lack of obedience.

Most of the material is exhortative or sermonic and well illustrated. The third chapter is the only one of a more theological nature. In it the author grapples with the problem of "lostness" and takes on the "universalists" and those who hold "the wider hope." His approach is the familiar evangelical one, and he critiques the evangelical Christians of North America for failing to fulfill the Great Commission. We have the potential for finishing the missionary task in this century, he says.

McQuilkin's view of a true missionary is narrower than that of most Mennonites. At times he overemphasizes sacrifice. He has a solid view, though, of what completing the missions task means: all shall hear with understanding the message of Christ, and there shall be a witnessing congregation in every community.

In an interesting appendix the author "answers" the "Buts . . ." of potential missionaries. Some of this is quite good.

William Block is pastor of Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Morden, Manitoba. He served as chaplain at Woodstock School, Mussoorie, U.P., India, from 1976-79.

The Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England, is producing four serial publications which will be of interest to all concerned with Muslim-Christian relations.

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Editorial

The nine articles which comprise the January 1985 *International Review of Mission* treat of various facets of 100 years of Protestant experience in Korea. All of the articles are by Koreans. The lead article essays the role of missionaries. From the beginning missionaries directed their ministry to the masses. Because of their conviction that people had to hear the gospel in the vernacular, they rejected the prevailing elitist educational pattern of conducting schools in Chinese and began to use the Korean language. This gave dignity to Korean language and culture and produced a salutary impact on cultural development.

As the second article demonstrates, the development of the church in Korea has always been situated in political turbulence. Even though the missionaries espoused a "non-political" gospel, that gospel played an important role in the shaping and directing of national affairs.

The Korean church has long been the object of intense interest because of its spiritual vitality, clear-cut missiological approach, and more recently its rapid growth. The growth figures used here are:

1910	200,000
1930	372,000
1950	600,000
1960	1,140,000
1970	2,200,000
1980	5,859,000

As Suh David Kwang-Sun says in his editorial, "While only two percent of Asian population is Christian, we are proud of the fact that twenty to twenty- five percent of South Koreans are Christian. This is a story of miracle." Miracle is never free of ambiguity. Park Keun-Won observes, "The positive mission policies and strategies adopted by the early missionaries in their efforts to evangelize Korea were based on the Nevius plan, which encouraged self- propagation, self-government and self-support." Whereas the Nevius plan proved unsuccessful in China, it worked in Korea.

Kim Byong-Suh discerns four stages in the growth of the Korean church. The first period, 1884-1910, was the time of emancipation. The Christian message was received gladly by the common people who were trying to escape the oppression under which they had long suffered. Then came the period of pioneering, 1906-30. Japan occupied Korea during this time, and the church both helped to pioneer in cultural and institutional development, as well as to undergird a spirit of independence and human dignity in the face of Japanese imperialism. The third growth period was 1940-60. World War II paved the way for fragmentation nationally and religiously. Numerous schisms occurred in the churches during this period—often instigated by outsiders. Nonetheless, the churches continued to grow. The period 1960-84 has seen even more dramatic church growth in a context of national development and modernization.

What has fostered such extraordinary growth? The authors put their fingers on several causes. First to be mentioned is the positive religious climate. Historically, religion has been valued and encouraged. Second, throughout most of this past century Korea has suffered from religious vacuum. Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism were in decline, and people were open to a religion that would restore foundation and meaning to life. In the third place, Korea suffered repeated crises: several revolts, foreign invasion, and wars. Fourth, Christian missions provided basic tools that supported the modernization process, for the Christian message was attuned to the modernization movement. The fifth cause is the rapid modernization which has occurred since the early 1960s. As it were, the church has been carried along on the wave of this wider socioeconomic development.

Such growth is not without its problems, however. The gospel presented by the missionaries was highly individualistic. This self-centeredness has played into impulses toward factionalism and schism. Furthermore, the church has accepted uncritically too much of the commercialism and materialism which has invaded Korean society since the 1960s. Kim Byong-Suh asserts, "Salvation, wealth and health represent the very essence of Christianity to many Korean Christians." A growing nationalistic spirit has reinforced this attitude. This may well represent the makings of a new civil religion—a blending of traditional religio-cultural values, Western capitalism, and Christianity in the service of the political.

I have read these articles with heightened interest, having just returned from three months in Southeast and East Asia. Christians in other Asian countries often feel themselves to be at a disadvantage when compared with the Korean churches. Two things may be said by way of reply. First, each country has its own particular history. There is little that is translatable or transportable from one country to another. While John Nevius' plan had little impact in China, it succeeded in Korea. Second, the "problems of success" are equally important as the reasons for failure. In the thrill of seeing rapid growth one can overlook the signals which call for cautious concern. —Wilbert R. Shenk

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A Theology of Cross-Cultural Mission

HUBERT SCHWARTZENTRUBER

A saintly gentleman once told me that some people in his congregation always talked about evangelism but became impatient with other members who saw evangelism from a different perspective. They finally separated themselves from the congregation, forming a splinter group in order to do evangelism. My brother who told the story had denture problems. Every time he spoke the word "evangelism" the word "vandalism" came out. I began to wonder if there is a danger of our evangelism becoming vandalism. Let me attempt, then, to raise a few issues regarding cross-cultural mission which may keep our evangelism from becoming vandalism.

The process of developing a theology

Our theology must always be shaped by who we are. To borrow a theology that is incongruent with our history is like buying a pair of shoes that do not fit. Although in style, they may be neither comfortable nor functional. We may feel out of place and embarrassed. They could also cause corns on our toes.

To develop a theology we need to be students of history, observing how God has worked out divine will and purpose in the past. Our theology is built on the stories of our life experiences.

A scientist will spend hours in the lab doing costly experiments until a theory is proven. Our development of a theology must grow out of our own cross-cultural experiences. It must be tried and tested in cross-cultural settings. The lab is the street, and the textbooks are people whose cultural and ethnic backgrounds differ from ours.

We cannot appreciate the richness of another culture until we have learned to appreciate our own. As long as I attempt to reject who I am, I will also reject other cultures. I have long ago stopped apologizing for being an Amishman.

Yet appreciation for my own culture dare never be a license for arrogance. It is coming to terms with who I am in order to free me to absorb the values and beauty of Latin-American, Native American, Chinese, Caribbean, and many other cultures. In our zeal to build cross-cultural relationships we must, however, guard against attempting to be something we can never be.

When I was a pastor of a black congregation I remained white, even though I recall being introduced by a black man to a black congregation as "the blackest man I know." A common bond in the human experience superimposes all our cultural differences. I worked hard at learning as much as I could about the heritage of black people. I learned some from books, but most insights came in people's living rooms as I ate at their tables or as we traveled together. As relationships developed we had no need to make each other over into our own experience. We found strength, beauty, and cultural nourishment in one another's heritage.

I recall with warmth a recent meeting in Adolpho and Betty Puricelli's living room in Toronto with some twenty Latin-American friends. We talked for two hours on an issue that concerned all of us. I could not speak Spanish and most could not speak English, so we needed a translator. I left that meeting feeling as though we did communicate very well. I sensed a bond developing which cultural differences could not effectively block or deny.

Cross-cultural realities of our society

Perhaps no other country in the world provides opportunity for cross-cultural experiences such as does Canada. The city of Toronto, for example, is home for people of more than eighty-five nationalities. Some schools have more than fifty nationalities represented among their student bodies. On the street where we live our ten closest neighbors are Italian, Greek, South African, Lebanese, Japanese, Caribbean, and Austrian; three families have roots for more than two generations in Canada.

Though immigration laws are becoming more restrictive, we will likely continue to have opportunity to welcome new neighbors. A cutting edge for ministy for Canadian Mennonites might have to do with immigration issues.

Canadian foreign policy of the past has placed Canadians in a position of influence and respect among the nations of the world. For that reason Mennonites should consider carefully the urgency and expectations that are placed upon us.

Cross-cultural realities of the church

The Mennonite church is no longer made up of whites with European ancestory. Whites are now becoming a minority in the world population of Mennonites. Missionaries from Argentina are now coming to Canada. Central and South America, Africa, and Asia are where the Anabaptist vision is being shaped for the twenty-first century. The Anabaptist flames are being fueled in the native communities in the north of Canada.

In the Chinese church in Toronto we see modeled authentic

Hubert Schwartzentruber, Toronto, is missions consultant for Mennonite congregations and conferences in Ontario and Quebec. *This article is condensed from a January 1985 inter-Mennonite consultation address.*

church growth. In Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver, churches of former Latin Americans are growing more rapidly than are white churches. On a Sunday morning we could hear a sermon from a Mennonite pulpit in at least ten languages in Canada.

The disconcerting facts are that the white church in Canada is still the body that controls power of both wealth and decision-making. Unless we white Canadian Mennonites find an acceptable way to relinquish control of decision-making and economic power and share equally with non-white congregations, we will be a diminishing denomination in Canada. The growing edge for us is likely in non-white communities

The non-white and non-ethnic Mennonites are a special gift from God to the church. In these integrated communities the Mennonite church will receive its mandate and keep alive a vision such as the early Anabaptists experienced.

Mennonite resources for cross-cultural mission

The Mennonite church does have resources to work faithfully at cross-cultural mission. We are also "aliens in a foreign land." We are far enough removed from the pain of being uprooted and settled in a new land so as not to be immobilized, but we are still close enough to understand and support those now going through that pain.

The Mennonite church has financial resources and educational institutions to equip us for whatever ministry God calls us to do. The Mennonite response to African famine has been overwhelming. The response of non-Mennonites to Mennonite Central Committee in the task is also encouraging. The Mennonite church has gained respect and credibility.

Many Mennonite young people, and older as well, have gained a wealth of experience in another country among people of another culture through mission and service involvement. These experiences now stand us in good stead in being authentic missionaries here in Canada.

Creating a vision for cross-cultural mission

Given the conviction that we indeed can develop cross-cultural congregations, how can we shape our vision? Who are the dreamers among us? Who helps us to interpret the dreams? What will keep our dreams from becoming nightmares?

Dreams will become reality as we search for an obedience and faithfulness to God's will. Our vision and dream must be based on biblical authority. The event of Christ on the cross broke down walls and barriers. New Testament writers affirm that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek. The coming of the Holy Spirit was experienced by people from many nations and tribes as they were gathered to celebrate the day of Pentecost. The apostles took quick action when there was discrimination between the Hebrews and the Hellenists. Peter was dramatically taught how wrong it is to consider one's race more important than another. The images of heaven are images of people gathered from many nations giving praise to God. Jesus once prayed, "Let thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

There may be reason because of language that some language groups may want and need their own congregations. Our overall strategy must, however, include a philosophy that all people in all social and economic classes are welcome in the worship assembly and part of the body of Christ which ministers to its community.

A congregation has no room for one dominant ethnic group to impose its values and customs on another. It is, however, appropriate for one ethnic group to share its values and customs with others in the congregation for the enrichment of all. As each ethnic group values its own culture, strength can be gained to value another which may be different. Racial arrogance and racial pride which lead to destructive prejudice have no room in a Christian assembly. The offenders usually are the majority group. The minority group may well have to declare clearly their own self-worth so as not to be destroyed by the majority.

The "black is beautiful" movement of the 1960s was a constructive movement. "White is beautiful" emphasis among the powerful majority would be most inappropriate. Nationalism of a small and powerless country becomes an instrument of survival, while nationalism of a rich and powerful country becomes an instrument of oppression. Racism on the part of the powerful majority is an action. Racism on the part of a minority is a reaction.

Within the church the new way of *shalom* is taught, modeled, and experienced. Whenever no opportunity for cross-cultural relationships exist, then there is great danger that our culture which we value becomes our prison. To become captives to only our way of thinking, our values, our culture, and our lifestyle is to become totally insensitive to what God is all

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about in Christ and the church in reconciling the world.

The church never stands idly by while a person or group is being reduced to something less than God intended for all of creation. The mission of the church is to experience forgiveness of sin. The call to wholeness is also to question and confront that which creates fragmentation. A congregation therefore becomes actively involved to bring *shalom* where there is no *shalom*. In a cross-cultural congregation there will likely be much more sensitivity to *shalom* and justice needs.

The Mennonite church would be a much healthier church if in our attempt to share the gospel with native people, as an example, we would have tried a little harder to learn some deep theological, social, and environmental insights from them. If our vision is to become a reality, then we must consciously plan for that to happen. A few good things happen by accident. Most are a result of careful planning. Let me suggest several areas where long-range planning might begin.

1. We need to train leaders. How can our schools begin to tool up to provide skills training for people with leadership potential? The schools themselves will need to reflect a cross-cultural faculty and staff if we expect to have a cross-cultural student body.

2. Our cross-cultural congregations need Christian educational materials to help them in the process of growing in biblical knowledge.

3. We need to provide money for meeting places and other congregational needs. In our major cities the potential for growth exists. Also in our major cities property values and cost of living are high and the income of many non-Canadian-born people is low.

4. Our church boards and committees need to reflect a cross-cultural component. The majority cannot decide what is in the best interest of the minority. They need to decide together what is best for everyone. Church staff should be sought who can best relate to people whose experiences are familiar and trusted.

The vision must always draw us to reflect theologically on what we as God's people are all about. The task of developing a theology for cross-cultural mission will take us the rest of our lives to develop. When we are convinced that we have finally come to a conclusion it is only a signal that we need to start over again. Each generation brings us new insights and experiences which shape us for tomorrow.

Leaving Family for the Kingdom's Sake

JOHN REGEHR

Something in me bristles when I hear Jesus say, "Unless you hate father, mother, wife, child, you cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14:26). And yet, I want to be utterly obedient. After all, Jesus is Lord.

Something in me turns remorseful when I remember how that hard saying of Jesus made it easy for me to ditch my marital and parental obligations and go off on two-month summer school ventures feeling supremely saintly. After all, family duties dare not obstruct the calling of God to Christian ministry. In my mind the call to ministry and the easy access to summer school at Winona Lake, Indiana, were far too easily fused. How could an opportunity so convenient be anything but providential?

No, I want never to eviscerate any of Jesus' sayings, even the hard ones. But neither do I want to misapply them in destructive ways. To interpret Jesus' requirement for discipleship so as to call for the discarding of family responsibilities may well be to use as a cop-out what we label a sacrifice.

Three Gospel messages

A choice of loyalties

Luke recorded Jesus as requiring us to hate parents and spouse and children if we wish to be his disciples (Lk. 14:26). Certainly Jesus could not mean that we are to wish them ill while we seek to promote his cause. After all, Jesus was unambiguous in his demand that we love even our enemies. Surely he will not absolve us of loving our family members. And most certainly the hate Jesus spoke of is not the hate that leads to divorce.

Jesus' instruction about trying to serve two masters is helpful here (Lk. 16:13). We cannot, he assured us, live for long under two equal and divergent authorities, both of whom claim full obedience. Our loyalties will tilt toward the one or the other, and eventually we will have to make a clear choice. To break the one master's claim to absolute authority over me is a violent act. To hate him, as Jesus spoke of it, describes well the emotional intensity of that choice.

Jesus talked graphically about that intensity. His final instructions to the twelve, as he sent them on a mission to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," were in effect warnings that their message about the kingdom will act as a sword (Mt. 10:1f.). Some will reject and resist the message and will oppose even those of their own family who want to accept it. Thus some who want to accept the message will have to choose to follow Jesus in the face of strong opposition. Members of their own family will threaten them with violence and disinheritance. Hating one's family, then, is letting them go in order to choose Christ. And, since the family is the life source and life context, it is in effect the losing of one's life for the sake of Christ. Indeed, some families have held funeral services for those of their number who chose to follow Jesus. And some have delivered up even their children to death (Lk. 21:16-17). This is a hate unlike the hate Jesus calls us to.

"Love me more."

Matthew heard Jesus use the comparative of love to say essentially the same thing: "He who loves father or mother . . . [or] son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Mt.

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10:37). Again, Jesus could not be asking us to stop loving our family members, but he does require us to make our love for him the determinative relationship. Love for our kin is not therefore less genuine, but it is derivative. This is not new. The people of God had heard it long ago: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind . . . [and] your neighbor as yourself" (Mt. 22:37-39).

Jesus responded quite curtly to would-be followers who were not ready to love him more than their families (Lk. 9:59-62). One such person could not cut loose from his father and wanted to put Jesus off until death had done the severing for him. Another wanted first to stage a farewell party. This would assure his family that they would remain primary despite his leaving, and he would always have a place to return to if following Jesus got too tough.

To say yes to Jesus means to say a strong no to father and mother, to siblings and spouse and children. Already at twelve Jesus said such a strong no to his baffled parents, even though he did not cease to be an obedient son. "Love me more," Jesus says to us. "Don't let these other valuable relationships have priority in providing security and worth, or in giving shape and purpose to your life." To love Jesus more is to let him be the source of our most basic identity. We are now first and fundamentally disciples of Jesus. All other relationships and identities have become secondary and derivative. I am a disciple of Jesus first, and then parent or child or grandparent. To reverse the order is not to be a disciple at all.

A test of security

The third key passage is the story of the rich young ruler (Lk. 18:18-30). He was one who wanted to serve two masters, God and mammon. Jesus called on him to hate his riches, to love the kingdom of God more, to leave that which up until then had given him more security and meaning than had God.

Peter saw the parallel in a flash. What the rich young ruler opted not to do, they, the disciples, had done. They had left their homes to follow Jesus. Jesus affirmed this and made his promise: "There is no man who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive manifold more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."

For the rich young ruler the question at issue was that of trust. Where would he place his confidence? At one level he trusted his faithfulness to the law. Perhaps he wanted Jesus to give him some extra credit for that. But Jesus probed to the heart of the law and cut the rich man to the bone by asking him to let go his wealth. Here lay his sense of value—human worth measured in shekels. Here his identity was rooted—he was known in town as the rich man. Here his security rested—he was safe in his fortress of stocks and bonds. Here was the source of his power—the words and the will of the wealthy have weight. And Jesus asked him to leave it, to get rid of it, to give it away to those who needed it not for prestige but for survival.

Though Peter understood that he and the other disciples had done what the rich young man chose not to do, he may have wondered whether they had gone far enough. After all, Jesus had not required of them that they sell their fishing equipment. Yet Jesus affirmed them. They did in some significant ways let go their financial securities and leave their families.

New Testament words on leaving

The New Testament uses "to leave" in various contexts. Among others its meaning is to forgive one who has sinned against us (Lk. 11:4), that is, to let go the wrong and whatever personal ego benefit we gain by remembering it against the wrongdoer. The word also means to cancel a debt (Mt. 18:27), to let go any benefit that could come to us from one who owes us something. At other times it indicates a temporary departure. In Gethsemane Jesus left the three disciples for a time while he went to pray elsewhere (Mt. 26:44). Jesus told the story of a landowner who went on a journey and left his servants in charge of his estate (Mk. 13:34).

This is the word which the disciples used when they said they "left everything" to follow Jesus (Mt. 19:7; cf. Lk. 5:11). It seems that some at least retained ownership of their property. We are told that in their confusion following the passion and resurrection of Jesus, they returned to their fishing vessels.

As for Jesus himself, his leaving family and Nazareth did not mean that he abandoned his duty to his mother. In significant ways he said no to her, yet at the cross his care for her was tender, and the transfer of responsibility for her was deliberate.

At times Jesus feared that people who were following him were being carried along by mob magnetism. They had no sense of leaving anything in order to follow along. It was costing them nothing. On such occasions he issued some of his hard sayings like the one about eating his flesh and drinking his blood (Jn. 6). Likewise in the context of his popularity we hear Jesus' requirement to hate parent and spouse and child (Lk. 14:25-35). He insisted that we know what we are leaving. There is to be a cost which we can count.

Jesus heaped up metaphors to strengthen the impact of his requirement. Can you finish the tower you began to build? Can you carry the war to completion? Can you endure when the road is long and difficult and the cross you carry is heavy? Jesus required that we renounce all else, that is, that we leave everything, so that we will have no alternative resources to escape to when the going gets tough. Even in the roughest times the bonding to him is to remain primary.

The three texts have one message. To hate one's family means to love Christ more than one's family, and both meanings are synonymous with leaving one's family for the sake of the kingdom of God. It is the radical renunciation of past securities, just as a person leaves father and mother to create the "one-flesh" relationship with a spouse (Gen. 2:24). It is to renounce as ultimate authority or central source of identity and meaning any relationship or possession and make Christ the absolute point of reference for all of life. Only in such an exclusive bonding of trust and obedience can we become "one" with him.

However, nothing in the texts we have looked at or in these hard sayings of Jesus warrants the abdication of our filial, or marital, or parental obligations. There is no hint at all that Jesus was asking us to abandon the responsibilities of our elemental relationships. We are certainly not being commanded to shrug off our duties to our own children while we meet the needs of other people's children in the name of Christ.

This understanding is corroborated in other places in the New Testament. While Jesus required one spouse to leave the other for the sake of the kingdom (Lk. 18:29), Paul instructed the Corinthian Christians not to do so (1 Cor. 7:11 uses the same word.). Surely Jesus and Paul were not at odds regarding the obligations or the permanence of the marriage covenant. Certainly Jesus regarded it to be a lifetime functional relationship (Mt. 19:6), and Paul insisted that even a sexual abstention is to be by mutual agreement and temporary (1 Cor. 7:5). No calling to a particular Christian vocation in a particular place can absolve one of this marital obligation.

Equally high priority is given to the obligation of parenting. Hannah even allowed her mothering duties to keep her from attending the religious festivals at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1:21f.). The New Testament instructs fathers quite specifically not to

provoke their children to anger (Eph. 6:4) and certainly not to the bitterness that results from continued discouragement (Col. 3:21). We have more than enough evidence in our day that a prolonged or profound feeling of abandonment will cause a child to become discouraged, angry, and bitter—often permanently.

Even Paul, despite his fervor in suggesting that the service of Christ ought to take precedence over becoming married (1 Cor. 7:26), was unambiguous about the demand of familial responsibilities. Children and grandchildren are to "learn their religious duty" and look after the needs of their elder kin (1 Tim. 5:4). The duty toward one's children is no less binding. "If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8). We have more than enough evidence in our day that the primary way of providing for our children is to remain faithful to our marriage covenant.

The dilemma remains

The call to faithfulness regarding family responsibilities must be trumpeted not only to missionaries and candidate hopefuls. It must be issued as urgently to all who seek success in any of the structures of our society. The next rung of the career ladder glistens gold; the bank account is thirsty again; the next professional degree dances on the horizon; the Thiessens managed to give their son a Corvette. We promise child and spouse and parent that the present neglect is both necessary and temporary. The next success goal is almost in our grasp, and then we will prove doubly dutiful. Then we will have time for letters, and leisurely conversation walks, and bedtime stories, and candlelight, and Scrabble games. In the meantime our loved ones will have to submit to being sacrificed to the gods and goddesses of this age.

What a tragedy that the gods of this age build empires under denominational labels too. Self-interest is served as easily in churches and mega-missions as in the multinational monstrosities of oil, steel, and coffee bean enterprises. In *A New Design for Family Ministry* (1982), Dennis Guernsey makes the telling point that the family is the primary context for carrying out the great commission (Mt. 28:19-20). It is bitter irony indeed when we give ourselves to the task of making disciples in regions beyond, or across the street, and in doing so cause such confusion and hurt in our own children that they turn against God and the church.

And yet it is hardly thinkable that a parent could be yielded wholly to Christ and not be called here and there to some ministry for which the children too would have to pay some price. And so they ought, lest they see themselves forever as the center of the universe. It must become clear to the family that the parents can hear God's calling in the needs of people other than their children. Nor will parents ever be able to walk this tightrope of multiple callings without causing some pain which the child and they together will have to resolve. And few parents and children can hope to do this without some mutually inflicted injustice. Therefore there is always much need for mutual understanding, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

How do my wife, Mary, and I hear these words of Jesus for ourselves? We left our grandchildren while we are on study leave. Yes, it is for the sake of the kingdom of God, and, yes, our grandchildren are paying some modest price for our being away. One of our sons told us on the phone how much they would like us to be seeing all the new and exciting things our little granddaughter is doing. The loss is, of course, much more ours than hers. We are not the primary sources of love and nurture for our grandchildren. We are, after all, grandparents. And yet we have said no to our grandchildren in significant ways. Many grandparenting tasks cannot be done well at a distance. However, the no is more to our own benefit in the relationship than to a meeting of their basic needs. They do have parents who care for them. If we had felt at all that our move away would have robbed them of their basic needs as children, we would not have left Winnipeg even for these nine months. We hope that any possible sense of abandonment they may have experienced will be minimal and reparable, and that the resumption of our hands-on grandparenting role will be as joyous as this long-distance grandparenting is lonely.

As for our children, they are all on their own and quite able to meet their basic needs. They are all in significant caring relationships. Our leaving them at a time like this is a far cry from my shrugging off the heavy paternal responsibility when I took off for summer school twenty years ago and left Mary with four children twelve years old and younger. One of our children wrote this Christmas, "We need you." Yes, they do. We do remain parents of our grown children, even though the relationships and responsibilities change. In respect to these changing relationships it may actually be a benefit for us to be away for a time. Temporary distancing has a way of guarding us against being too intrusive in our parenting. It also has a way of providing perspective, so that we can see with clarity those needs which it is indeed our responsibility to meet. The time of separation is, therefore, not an abandonment. It is proving to be a time for the deepening of affection and for clarifying our current responsibilities.

No, it wasn't the guilt about shirked duties that caused the emptiness at Christmas while we were here alone and all our children and grandchildren celebrated together at home. It was what we were missing that was heavy, and it is to this that Jesus spoke when he said, "Unless you love me more than these, you can't be my disciples." Mary and I have chosen to be disciples, and for this year a part of the price of that choice is leaving our children and grandchildren.

Christian Lifestyle in Biblical Perspective

ROBERT J. SUDERMAN

Offering a perspective about lifestyle according to the Scriptures is like giving an overview of the Bible itself. Lifestyle in the Bible is always assumed to be related to the cultural context on the one hand and to the will of God on the other hand. We see a dynamic relationship between those two factors; to separate them is like trying to divide fire from burning. Many lifestyles are reported in the Bible—some pleasing to God, some not.

It is my growing conviction that the controlling biblical principle concerning the lifestyle of God's people does not revolve around wealth or poverty, justice or injustice, violence or peace, human sexuality, prophetic witness, nonconformity, simple living, or the inner life. Rather, the controlling principle is one of **freedom.** This is not to say that the above are not important considerations for the Christian, but at the base of each of these legitimate concerns is the basic question of freedom.

Does our lifestyle—including our ethical decisions and involvements—free us more and more to discern and to do the will of God? Does our lifestyle free others to know and to do the will of God? Consideration of economic position and social status are important for us as a people of God. This does not mean that to be a laborer is intrinsically better than to be an owner, or that to own a car with chrome is more sinful than to have a buggy without chrome. Rather, we must know that our participation in one function may bind our freedom to do what we know is the will of God; the control we exercise over others limits their freedom to know and do the will of God; the things we own or do not own bind us in our obedience to God's will.

We measure justice and injustice neither by the things we have or do not have, nor by a particular act or non-act. Rather, we measure that justice by the degree to which what we have and do is a liberating force in our lives and in the lives of others—a force which gives us the freedom to act according to God's will.

General biblical perspective

Abraham

Basically, the story of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 shows that he did not feel bound by his family ties and his nationalistic feelings. He was free to be an instrument of the unknown God and to use his life and the lives of his descendants to be a **blessing** to other nations. Although Abraham was a rich man and took his possessions with him (12:5-20), his possessions did not dictate the freedom he felt to follow what he thought was a promise of God. Abraham took a new road which could lead him to give freedom to others—to be a blessing to others.

Moses

In later Judaism Moses became identified as the man who was blessed with the Torah (Law), which in establishment Judaism was the basis of God's will for them. However, if we read the Old Testament carefully, we must conclude that this emphasis on law was a later development. The initial current of Hebrew thought was not about Moses as the lawgiver but about Moses as the liberator. He felt the freedom to give up his own priviledged status within the court of the Egyptian Pharaoh, his own security, and his wealth to dedicate his life to bring freedom to others.

This story shows us again that the sin of oppression is not that people have to work hard—or even that people suffer. The sin of oppression is that people are not free to know and worship their God. The governing principle seems to be the freedom of one person to bring freedom to others—the freedom to know and do the will of God.

The tabernacle and the temple

We know that the fundamental purpose of God was that people should regard him as a movable God—a God not fixed to one geographical place. For this reason God prepared a tabernacle and looked with some disfavor upon the building of a fixed temple. The idea is not simply that God wants the freedom to move around; rather, he is the God of a pilgrim people who must have the freedom to move around, a people who are not bound or hindered by geography, possessions, or buildings in their search for the will of, and obedience to, God.

The judges and the kings

God was against the establishment of a standing kingship with a standing army and tight control over its population because the formation of a stagnant kingship meant the enslavement of a free people to do God's will (1 Sam. 8). God much preferred the more charismatic leadership style of the judges, not because God did not want order, but rather because God wished freedom for people. God desired a flexibility that other leadership styles, especially the formation of a biological dynasty, might threaten.

Institutionalized freedom

This will to have an unshackled people, free to know and to do the will of God, became institutionalized within the law of Moses. The concept of the Jubilee year was an effort to institutionalize freedom. No one must become so attached to possessions or to social position that they are willing to take the freedom from others. If that should happen, each must be willing to reestablish again a ritual of freedom to be a blessing to others.

The measure by which the landowners and bankers were judged was not a fixed rule about how many acres they could own or how much interest they could charge, but rather by how much freedom they were robbing from their fellow neighbors. The concept of the sabbatical year (every seven years) was another effort to free landowners from themselves being shackled by their own property. The sabbatical year was an institutionalized test of whether people had enough faith to be free to follow God or whether they had enough freedom to put their faith in God.

This same experiment of freedom was also extended to a weekly ritual with the concept of the Sabbath day. This was not to be seen simply as a day of rest. The Sabbath day was a weekly reminder that God is in control of history, that God provides for people, and that we need to have enough faith to free us from the shackles of daily routine. God wills for people the freedom to place their confidence in his providence and power.

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The cities of refuge

This concern for liberty was extended in Judaism even to the outcasts and criminals of their society. In Numbers 35 we find a complete set of rules for setting up six cities of refuge for those who have killed unintentionally, to protect a person from the vengeance of the relatives of the dead person. Again, the governing principle of the concepts of justice and injustice is the concern for freedom.

The prophets

The message of the prophets was one of justice to avoid injustice and oppression. Oppression is sin because it prohibits oppressed people from having the freedom to be children of God and to do as God wills. Poverty is against the will of God because poor people cannot freely make decisions they must make as people of God. Again and again we hear the clear ring that justice is good because then we are free to seek and to do the will of God. Then we are agents of freedom to others so that they may also know and do God's will. In this way our lives are a blessing to others and to ourselves.

Jesus and the Pharisees

We have often noted that Jesus spoke his harshest words against the religious leaders of his day; he seemed to have more patience with the sinners than with the saints. Many explanations have been offered. Some say that Jesus hated the wealth of the religious establishment, others that he was speaking against their power and privileges, others that Jesus was anti-institutional, and others that he was anti-intellectual. Although each of these may contain some of the truth; basically, another problem existed. The religious establishment of Jesus' time was using position, power, prestige, wealth, law, institutions, and hermeneutic to control the minds of the poor and illiterate, to bind them within the established order—the traditions and the customs, and to shackle their minds from knowing the liberating message of the will of God. The loss of their freedom to know and to do the the real will of God as prescribed in the law was what Jesus attacked so viciously and changed so radically. The purpose of God was not the close attention to binding details but the liberty to see God as *Abba*, a God who wanted the best for his children and wanted them to enjoy the liberty of living in his grace and trusting in his mercy.

Jesus and his miracles

The miracles realized by Jesus are a further indication of his freeing ministry to others. The emphasis we have in the exorcism-healing-forgiving ministry is meant to convey the fact that when the kingdom of God enters a given situation, the satanic chains are broken and untied. The evil spirits depend on the creation of—and the acceptance of—fear in order to hold people in bondage within their individual prisons. The arrival of the kingdom of God through its representative, Jesus (later the disciples and the early church), destroys this bondage and liberates the people who accept this new kingdom.

Jesus and his ethics

Much has been written about Jesus' admonition not to "worry about tomorrow," because God will take care of us as he takes care of the birds. Some say that Jesus was anti-planning; others say that he was anti-work; others, that he was anti-wealth. As André Trocmé has so brilliantly shown, this text is probably rather taking seriously the freeing concepts of the Jubilee, the sabbatical, and the Sabbath. Often our tomorrows are enslaved by our todays, and our todays are enslaved by our tomorrows. The things we cherish so much and "can't do without" prohibit us from moving freely into a future guided by the will of God. Poverty, in the Bible, is not a virtue. It is a sin because it prevents people from being all they are meant to be for God. For the same reason, wealth is not a virtue: the camel-and-needle story is an indication of how improbable it is to have wealth and not to be dictated by the wealth. The sin of wealth is basically the same as the sin of poverty; both define the value of our existence on the basis of subsistence, and both prevent the openness that God wants people to have the freedom toward the future which is his will.

Jesus and his context

The governing principle suggested above is basic in the entire ministry of Jesus. His ministry with women was to free them from the cultural and religious chains which had long bound them. He spoke to them in public, he touched them, he taught them, he gave them a status they had never dreamed of before. In short, Jesus freed women to be accountable beings within the kingdom of God. Jesus showed precisely the same attitude toward the Samaritans—the other despised group in his culture. He freed his disciples to consider themselves as lords of the Sabbath, instead of the Sabbath being their taskmaster. He purified the temple because the Jewish commercial world had invaded the place reserved for the Gentiles to enter and worship. The commercial activity was oppressive to the basic right—which all nations enjoyed—to enter. Jesus' emphasis was that the temple must be a house of prayers for **all** nations, not just one.

The ultimate example for us, of course, is that Jesus was willing to endure the cross instead of bowing again to the agents of oppression—the Romans, the law, the religious institutions. This is the scandal of our faith—that we gain our ultimate freedom through our complete submission to the will of God. Dominance is a contradiction of freedom, and true freedom is gained and given only through a rejection of dominance and oppression. Because of this Jesus taught his followers to model leadership from a posture of servanthood because in this way we are really liberated to know and to do the will of God.

Paul and his ministry

We can see this same tendency in the ministry of Paul. The basic new revelation that Paul received in his Damascus-road experience was the freedom with which the Spirit wanted to work even within the Gentile community. Paul did not need to be convinced that God existed, or that God was merciful, or that God forgave sins.

The fundamental change of mind for Paul was that this God to whom he had dedicated his life wanted the gospel to break through the barriers of Judaism and create a new people of Gentiles and Jews in one community. The basic new revelation was that the traditional barriers of culture, tradition, law, and blood no longer defined the limits of God's interest. Rather, Paul realized that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17). This, then, was the new impulse of Paul's missionary activity: "Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1).

Paul, then, preached this message of freedom. He was free to accept a salary for his work, or he was free to reject it. Everything was allowed, but not everything was prudent. The strong in the faith were free to eat meat offered to idols, or they were free to reject it for the sake the weaker brother or sister. Paul was free to have Timothy circumcized because of the Jews (Acts 16), or not to have Titus circumcized (Gal. 2). Women, after hearing Paul preach, felt free to remove their veils, speak in tongues, pray and prophesy, disturb congregational meetings, and become leaders in the churches, all because of the

new freedom they had found to do the will of God.

Furthermore, Paul encouraged women to discover their gifts from the Spirit and to exercise them, something which was virtually unheard of in the context in which he spoke. He taught that they were now free to marry or they were free to remain single. The cultural norms no longer dictated.

Paul felt liberated to forget all the things that lay behind him—all his achievements as a successful Jew—and press on toward the goal. He knew poverty and plenty; he was familiar with being "well fed or hungry . . . living in plenty or in want" (Phil. 4:12). But these things were not the governing principle of his life. He realized that in Jesus he had been set free from worries about that and could be content in the power that Christ gave him. In other words, in Paul we see a person radically committed to and open to the changes that the Spirit of God wanted to bring into his ministry. Once he broke free of the traditional shackles, he was free to glory in the power of God in his life.

The early church

The book of Acts is a moving account of the incredible shattering of accepted boundaries and customs by a small community which was convinced that the Spirit of God was leading them to heights hitherto unknown. In Pentecost we see the untying of the tongues that had been bound since the days of Babel. The sin of Babel was the effort to rise beyond the human condition, to sit in the place of God, and to use that position to dominate and impose their culture and their will over others. Fundamentally, this was an enslaving effort: free communication was confused, and humankind was condemned to live under this self-inflicted limitation. But with the new outpouring of the Spirit in Pentecost, our tongues are freed; people from every corner of the world can understand the witness of our testimony. Again we note a freeing impulse as the community of the Spirit breaks one barrier and transcends one boundary after another.

The Spirit shattered the barrier to the Samaritans. Although persecution against the church finally forced the disciples into Samaria, the fruitful ministry of Philip with the Samaritans was officially investigated, blessed, and accepted by the Jerusalem pillars Peter and John. The next target to fall was the Gentile-pagan barrier. Peter said, "Who am I to hinder the free movement of the Spirit?" when he saw what was happening in the house of Cornelius. After that the freedom which the apostles felt to confront princes and kings, magicians, philosophers, capitalists, jailers, Asiatics, Europeans, high class and low class, is literally legendary.

Although opposition arose at every turn, the liberating message was preached and taught. Most were too bound up in their daily existence with their cultural chains to accept what was being said. But for those who did accept the message, we see a breaking of dependencies on their former lifestyles. The Ethiopian eunuch, the Roman military man, the capitalistic Lydia, the Philippian jailer, or the rich Barnabas did not all embrace the same lifestyle in exactly the same way. What is clear is that each one was willing to face the future under new guidelines which freed them from their present cultural condition to an openness to discern and do the will of God.

Implications for our lifestyle

If we accept even in part the thesis sketched in the above review of biblical materials, our first step in the application would be to try to understand the lives and the context of the people with whom we work and to ask the basic question of freedom. How free are they to project a future where they can profoundly search for and do the will of God?

On the other hand, what binds them? Poverty and wealth, with their emphasis on subsistence, can bind our lives. Illiteracy makes people depend on the opinions of others without being able to grapple personally with the materials available. Injustice, oppression, and violence impede their openness to the future. The national health condition, the national malnutrition rate, the fatalistic mind-set that nothing can change, the national and personal inferiority complex impede for people the possibility of freeing themselves to something new. The dependency mentality, which has been carefully nourished in the political, economic, and religious spheres, inhibits the freedom with which people can step out. A substandard educational system perpetuates the above sins.

If we take seriously the model in Acts, we will realize that when the gospel enters this kind of context, it cannot be neutral. It will challenge these structures at their roots, even though this may result in confrontation with these structures.

The next obvious thing is to analyze our own lifestyles and mission efforts to see whether we are freeing agents. To what extent do our efforts create more or less dependency? To what extent are we able to change the fatalism which exists around us? In biblical vocabulary, to what extent can we provide hope for a freer future? Are we removing some chains? To what extent am I free to know and to do the will of God? Am I a slave of my cultural baggage? Does my having a vehicle and an education bless others or curse others? To what extent does the fact that I have more money than others impede my openness to the future?

The fundamental governing principle in our discussion of lifestyle should be evident in the question: To what extent am I free? To what extent do the things I have or don't have make me a blessing to others?

The discernment of freedom is not a private matter—between me, my closest friend or relative, and my God. The life in community is meant to help us from personal justification of whatever action we commit, while the sensitivity of the community prevents the discernment from becoming a legalistic and pharisaic witch-hunt. The community process allows for a creative tension which is the foundation of creative freedom.

Perhaps the biblical text which best defines what I have been trying to say is found in Romans 12:1-2 (NIV):

> *Therefore, I urge you, . . . in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Our ability to discern the true will of God depends to a large extent on the degree to which we have freed ourselves from the present world order, not in the sense of escape but in the sense of having challenged the logic of that order, and being free to accept an alternate logic. This new possibility gives rise to the "new creation" that Paul talks about in 2 Corinthians 5:17 and in Galatians 6:15. This is the order of freedom which we accept in Christ who said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (Jn. 8:31)

Witness: "Accounting for the Hope in Us" (1 Peter)

ROELF S. KUITSE

This is the fourth of a five-part series, "Mission and Hope," first presented at the Overseas Missions Seminar of Mennonite Board of Missions in June 1980. Roelf S. Kuitse has been a missionary, educator, and pastor in the Netherlands, Indonesia, West Africa, and the USA. He served as director of the Mission Training Center, Elkhart, Indiana, from 1979-1982 and teaches there now.

The basis of our hope is what God did in and through Israel and the Son of Israel, Jesus Christ. In and through Christ's resurrection the way of life of Christ was affirmed as the only way that has future and can give hope ("Expectant Memory," *Mission Focus*, March 1985). Being tied to Christ—in faith and hope, in expectant memory—means becoming part of the body of Christ, the church, the new humanity, the household of God, the house of God, built of mutually supporting stones ("Hope Alive," *Mission Focus*, June 1985).

The body of Christ is a living hope. The church is the way of hope. "Witness" also refers to that way. In 1 Peter witness is described as "account[ing] for the hope that is in you" (3:15, NEB).

Encouragement

First Peter was written to encourage and strengthen Christians in a time of trial. These Christians were mainly Christians from the Gentiles and had to live as a small minority among the Gentiles. That is a situation of temptation and continuous struggle. The old ways of life, the old powers and patterns, still have their influence, especially in times of trial and stress. Responses of the past to life's challenges have not yet lost their impact. The sea is so wide, and one's boat is so small.

That is why this epistle is full of encouragement and admonition: "away with all malice . . ." (2:1); "lead an ordered and sober life . . ." (4:7); "have no fear . . ." (3:14). There is not only temptation of being drawn back into the old ways of reacting but also the threat of oppression and persecution which cause suffering, a threat coming from the Gentile majority. Behind the resistance, opposition, and persecution, the writer of 1 Peter sees demonic powers at work. "Your enemy the devil, like a roaring lion, prowls round looking for someone to devour" (5:8). The body of Christ is exposed to the same opposition and hate as was Christ. To cope with this opposition and hate, to deal with these evil powers, God puts the church on the way of hope.

In an attempt to help Christians in their struggle and trial the writer of 1 Peter reminds them of their hope in Christ. "God . . . in his great mercy gave us new birth into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!" (1:3). "Fix your hopes on the gift of grace which is to be yours when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1:13). "God . . . raised [Christ] from the dead and gave him glory, and so your faith and hope are fixed on God" (1:21). "[Christ] was made manifest in this last period of time for your sake" (1:20). Christ will be manifested as the "Head Shepherd" (5:4). Christians have to live between this first and last manifestation mentioned in 1 Peter 1:30 and 5:4.

Good conduct

To live as newborn people in that situation means to maintain good conduct among the Gentiles so that "they will come to see for themselves that you live good lives, and will give glory to God on the day [of visitation]" (2:12). The Greek word for "see" (*epopteúein*) is used only here in the New Testament. This word was used often in the Gentile mystery-cults in the first centuries. These mystery-cults attracted many people and were competitors of Christianity. Their aim was to gain spiritual insight into the divine mysteries of the world. In order to gain these insights, all kinds of spiritual exercises were performed. The highest stage a member of a mystery-cult could reach was the stage of *epopteía*, vision, insight into the divine mysteries. What is the end for the mystery-cults is the beginning for the Christian faith: to see God in the lives of Christians, to gain insight into the ways of God via the works of those who belong to Christ. On the day of visitation, the day of conversion, the believer sees a new world and experiences a new reality.

The good behavior in 1 Peter 2:12 (and 3:2) enjoined on Christians is to be their response to the actions of Gentiles rather than to allow Gentile actions to determine theirs. If they would let their actions be determined by the actions of their opponents, the devil's circle of evil and hate would never be broken. The response should be determined by Christ, by his example that should be followed (2:21-25). In this way of discipleship the Christians will share Christ's sufferings. They know, however, that in and through these sufferings Christ has gained and will gain the victory. That is why there can be joy in spite of all difficulties: "This is cause for great joy, even though . . ." (1:6); "a joy too great for words" (1:8); "It gives you a share in Christ's sufferings, and that is cause for joy" (4:13).

Fear and hope

First Peter calls Christians to stick to the hope which is Christ, to good conduct, to right response according to the example of Christ. Then in 3:15 the epistle speaks of "the readiness to account for the hope that is in you." That is a striking and beautiful definition of mission: to account for the hope in us.

Fear makes silent. The opponent rules; the enemy speaks with power. "Have no fear of them: do not be perturbed, but hold the Lord Christ in reverence in your hearts" (3:14-15). The acknowledgment and awareness of Christ as Lord frees one from fear and leads to the preparedness to give "account of the hope that is in you." Or, to say it in a different way, by giving account of the hope, the Lord is sanctified in the hearts of believers. In response to questions and accusations, always be prepared, always be ready.

The word "hope" is used here in a double sense. First is the sense of what is hoped, the object or the content of hope: the lordship of Christ, his victory in the resurrection, the eternal glory in Christ to be revealed (5:10), the rule of God in Christ for ever and ever (5:11).

In the second place, hope is in the subjective sense ("hope that is *in you*"): the personal relation to and involvement in what is hoped or expected. The attitude of expectancy is the attitude of hope. This personal aspect can easily lead to fanaticism. That is why the writer adds "with modesty and respect" (other translations are "with gentleness and reverence" or "with courtesy and respect"). Modesty, gentleness, and courtesy (different translations of the Greek word

praútes, also used in 1 Corinthians 10:1) are words describing an attitude of not imposing oneself on others and taking care that the other is not hurt so that the gap does not become deeper because of words that are misunderstood. The second word is "respect" or "reverence" (*phóbos* which also means awe or fear) for the other person—in spite of opposition—as a creature of God, as one for whom Christ died. An attitude of courtesy and respect is part of the way the Christian accounts for the hope that is in her or him. This attitude does not go together with not taking the other seriously, with distorting or ridiculing the opinion, faith, or religion of others. 'Keep your conscience clear" (3:16); act and speak in such a way, even when you are abused, that your acts and words reflect the way of Christ.

People of God

Another point of importance in times of trial and temptation, opposition and persecution, is the encouragement the community of believers gives to the individual. This community is described in ways that remind us of the letter to the Ephesians (see "Hope Alive," *Mission Focus*, June 1985). Again the image of a building or house is used. Christ was rejected by humans, but in God's sight he was the chosen one, the precious one, the living stone, to which the believers come as living stones, brought together and built together into a house where the Spirit of God dwells (2:4-8). To know and to experience that is a great encouragement in times of trial and persecution.

Many images are used to point to this new community and its meaning for the believer: "a spiritual temple," "a holy priesthood," "a chosen race," "a dedicated nation," "a people claimed by God for his own." On the way from resurrection to consummation, this community keeps alive in the world the expectant memory of what God has done in Christ for humankind.

In 1 Peter 2:9-10 the divine indicative—not an imperative—is used: "you *are* . . ." Because of what God did in Christ and because of the fact that divine acts have touched their lives, the people of God are living together in a new situation as individuals and as community. A new situation is characterized by different names, names that have also been used for Israel in the Old Testament.

A "chosen race" (Is. 43:20) is a people chosen from the world and the nations. God's election is always "election for service" (Rowley:1952). Service to the world includes keeping the world open for the praise of God.

A "royal priesthood" (Ex. 19:6) refers to the priest in Israel representing God among the people in giving directions *(thora)* for the way of life. The priest in Israel also represented the people before God in prayer and intercession. Israel is called a "royal priesthood," the nation that is the priest among the nations, representing God among the nations and representing the nations before God. The church is also called "royal priesthood," again in the double sense: representing God in the world in witness and service, and representing the world before God in prayer and intercession. "Royal" implies belonging to the king, participating in his rule and therefore free from the rule of the powers of this world. Living together in royal freedom, witnessing and serving, praying and interceding, the church becomes the place where the powers of the world no longer rule.

"You shall become my special possession . . . my holy nation" (Ex. 19:6). The word used for nation here is a word generally used for Gentiles (Hebrew: *goj*; Greek: *éthnos)*. The word for people is the word used for Israel (Hebrew: *am*; Greek: *laós*). The use of both words for the new fellowship in Christ makes it clear that in Christ the wall between Jews and Gentiles has been broken (Eph. 2). A holy nation is set apart for the service of the holy one.

This new community described by different names is a community gathered around Christ, not for its own sake but for the sake of the world, in order "to proclaim the triumphs of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). Only by doing this can the community be a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation, a holy nation. The object of the praise is the new creation that has started in Christ and of which the church is the beginning.

"You *are* . . ." is the divine indicative. Yet this community still lives in the world in the hope of the definitive, final triumph of Christ. That is why there are also imperatives: "Awake! be on the alert! . . . Stand up to [the devil]" (5:8-9). The writer is especially concerned that Christians not respond in a wrong way to the oppression and the enmity they have to endure. The response they give ought not to be determined by the actions of the enemies but by the example of Christ (2:22-25). The danger is that in these situations of crisis "the old Adam," the old way of life, will raise its head again. That is why this epistle is full of warnings and admonitions. The situation between resurrection and consummation is the time of church and mission, a time of temptation and suffering, a time of alertness and joy, a time of faith and hope.

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In review

The Early Anabaptists. By Eberhard Arnold. Rifton, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1984, 60 pp., $2.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Abe J. Dueck

This pamphlet is a reprint of an earlier edition published in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* in July 1969. The text is based on extensive notes on an address by Eberhard Arnold (Sr.) delivered to the Society of Brothers shortly before his death in 1935.

Arnold (1883-1935) was the founder of the Bruderhof in Germany which later moved to England, then to Paraguay in 1941, and then, in the early 1960s to New York. In the meantime, relationships were established with the Hutterian Brethren in North America, and today four Bruderhofs exist, three in the USA and one in England.

In the address Arnold demonstrates his acquaintance with sixteenth-century Anabaptist writings. His thesis relies heavily on Ludwig Keller's thesis, namely that "the Anabaptists had their roots in movements that form an unbroken chain with evangelical movements going back to the very earliest time of Christianity" (p. 6). Thus he describes various movements such as the Waldenses and Franciscans. The latter part of the address then tries to document the spiritual affinity of the Anabaptists with the earlier movements.

Arnold's address is much more than an attempt to clarify the historical record. The ultimate purpose is stated clearly in the final paragraph: "Let us live in such a way that Christ is the Messiah-King, that he is here, that we live in a Messianic time because the Messiah Christ has come!" (p. 52).

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Proclaim the Good News: A Short History of the Church Missionary Society. By Jocelyn Murray. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985, xiii+304 pp., £2.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Wilbert R. Shenk

The Church Missionary Society of the Anglican Church will soon reach its bicentennial. Its history spans the period of the modern missionary movement. Founded in 1799 in the early years of modern missions, it rose to preeminence among missionary societies during the latter half of the nineteenth century and has played a prominent part in the years of rapid change since World War I.

Jocelyn Murray brings to the task of telling this story the authority of experience—having served as a CMS missionary in Kenya herself—and the credentials of doctoral training in African history.

While she pays proper attention to the CMS structure and leading personalities in the various periods, Murray brings balance into the story by analyzing the role of women and the indigenous pastors and evangelists without whom no missionary work can be a success. Two personalities, however, stand out as the most influential forces in the history of CMS: Henry Venn in the nineteenth century and Max Warren in the twentieth. Both Venn and Warren were administrators who left their indelible imprint through outstanding vision, insight into missionary approaches, and dynamic leadership.

This is a history worth reading from the standpoint of how an organization must adapt to the times in order to serve. This becomes especially clear toward the end of the book as Murray describes the post-World War II years marked by political and social upheaval which affected every phase of missionary work. As the story comes to an end in 1980, the CMS is seeking to chart a fresh course for itself in a world vastly different from that of 1799 when it all began in the Castle and Falcon pub near Aldersgate in London.

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Church Versus State in South Africa: The Case of the Christian Institute. By Peter Walshe. London/New York: C. Hurst & Company/Orbis Books, 1983, 234 pp., $19.95.

Reviewed by Titus F. Guenther

Peter Walshe skillfully tells the dramatic story of Christianity in South Africa over the past few decades as it relates to an increasingly totalitarian regime. Though the story has some blind spots, it is gripping and inspiring.

Against a background of apartheid which led to its formation in South Africa, the ecumenical, multiracial Christian Institute has stood with prophetic boldness. Shocked to the core by the Sharpville shooting of sixty-nine black protesters by the police in 1960, Christian voices from throughout South Africa warned churches and the government to repent of the idolatry of apartheid, with its "nature gods of race, soil, blood and culture" (p. 50).

The Christian Institute, spearheaded by former members of the *Broederbond* (Afrikaaner Secret Society) and from the top ranks of the largely apartheid-supporting Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), urged fellow Christians to reconsider their first loyalty—"to an ethnic group, a human tradition, a political idea, or to Christ?" (p. 62). The DRC synod declared these messages heretical, and the government responded with increased repression.

In its fourteen years of existence, the Institute tried, together with the South African Council of Churches, to be God's agent of reconciliation where there was conflict and hatred. Its efforts, particularly in attempting to avoid the repeat of the horrid scene in Soweto in 1976 in which 300 people were killed by police, 176 of which were schoolchildren demonstrating against the imposition of the Afrikaans language, led to the banning of the Christian Institute in 1977 by the government.

Had the Institute failed? In closing Walshe observes that the apartheid government soon afterward gained a massive electoral victory, but that the "voice of prophetic Christianity had not been stilled" (p. 222).

The reading of this book raises several questions: (1) Is Walshe too uncritical when he sweepingly declares black liberation theology and black-consciousness movements to have "scriptural foundation"? (2) Was the high-handed intervention of the World Council of Churches in South Africa, through financial grants to liberation movements, perhaps more of a hindrance than a help? (3) Is Walshe too critical of the Institute's hope to convert the government?

The author speaks of the naivete of the Institute's nonviolent position and encourages full moral support to black-consciousness movements. But the author's own facts seem to question such a path. In the later stages the Institute did reluctantly move in the direction of supporting the programs of black pressure groups, and only then was the government swift to ban and silence both. What would the outcome have been had the Institute retained its prophetic voice and social critique based strictly on obedience to the Word of God in Christ rather than allowing itself to be pressured into seeking political effectiveness by tacitly supporting movements which must, as Walshe says, "take the future into their own hands"?

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God of the Lowly: Socio-historical Interpretations of the Bible. Edited by Willy Schottroff and Wolfgang Stegemann. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984, 172 pp., $9.95 (pb).

Reviewed by David Schroeder

The interpretation of biblical texts in this volume is "materialist," an approach to the Bible that has become popular in some of the Romance-language countries (p. 2). It relies less on the critical-historical method than on a structuralist approach to the text. The claim is made that this approach is a practical one and is based on the materialism of the Bible itself.

The materialist approach is explained by Aurel von Jüchen. He contrasts two approaches: Bible interpretation that sees the human person in "idealist" terms (as an abstract entity) and an interpretation that presents people as they really are.

Such an approach attempts to discover the real-life setting of people in the past and look at the real life of the present, seeking to build a bridge from one to the other (p. 7). This involves recognizing the material conditions that gave rise to the life and expectations of that day. The claim is made that a materialist interpretation would save us from the idealist exegesis which "leads to abstractionism and global, indifferentiated views" (p. 10).

Dorothe Sölle in an essay on "Between Matter and Spirit: Why and in What Sense Must Theology Be Materialist?" indicates that she would like to bring out the sensuous element in materialism (p. 86). In this sense the materialist thinking attempts to overcome the separation of mind and matter rather than simply concentrate on the material or on the spiritual.

Traditional theology from the time it was hellenized is characterized by Sölle as "friendly to spirit and hostile to body, individualistic and inimical to the masses, and masculine" and has repeatedly been turned into an instrument of subjugation, in opposition to the interest of others: the poor, those of other races, women" (p. 90). Theologians even came to look upon materialist thinking as opposed to God and consequently removed God from the everyday world of the flesh, thus denying the incarnation itself.

This traditional bourgeois theology tends "to exalt God more, to set him at a distance, to make the experience of God independent of the material, to separate it from popular piety and to spiritualize it" (p. 91). To give a materialist interpretation of the Bible is to resist those tendencies to spiritualize the biblical accounts. But Sölle also points out that the practical materialism based on production geared to profit rather than to need is also to be avoided.

Kuno Füssel reviews the results of a materialist approach to exegesis as found in Fernando Belo's *Lecture Matérialiste de l'évangile de Marc*, Michel Clévenot's *Approaches Matérialistes de la Bible*, and Georges Casalis' *Les idées justes ne tombent pas de ciel (Correct ideas do not fall from skies)*. This is helpful in that their work is not well known in the English-speaking world.

These lead articles are followed by good examples of exegesis conducted along materialist lines: Willy Schottroff on Amos, Jürgen Kegler on Jeremiah 26 and 36, and Frank Crüsemann on Ecclesiastes. New Testament texts in Part 2 are exegeted by Ekkehard Stegemann (Mk. 2:1-3:6), Luise Schottroff and Wolfgang Stegemann (Mk. 2:23-28), and Luise Schottroff (the parable of the workers in the vineyard). Again they are excellently done and point out the dynamics of the conflicts and situations which lie back of the reports as recorded in Scripture.

A final article by Wolfgang Stegemann gives a review of Gerd Theissen's description of early Christianity as "vagabond radicalism." He does not accept Theissen's claim that the disciples were not of the poor.

The materialist interpretation as here presented yields some exciting results. It pays close attention to the socio-historical setting of the texts. It is a good base to start from even though the language and description of social conditions borrows heavily from Marxist analysis of society.

The desire to build a bridge between the text and the present age is also commendable. It is not enough, however, to give a materialist exegesis that uncovers the plight of the poor and lowly and then proceeds to the present context. The exegeses need to be followed by a careful statement of the theology, or beliefs, of the biblical writers before being taken to its meaning for our setting. Not to give it this full treatment will make materialist exegesis as one-sided as it claims traditional exegesis to be.

I am also not convinced that the poor and lowly can be found in every setting. The whole point of the materialist approach seems to be to show that God is a God of the lowly as the title suggests. However, God comes to liberate not only the lowly but all who are in bondage of one sort or another—rich or poor.

The essays in this volume are good examples of what J. H. Elliott calls "sociological exegesis." This emphasis will add a whole new dimension to biblical studies and will overcome some of the sterility of a purely historical-critical approach.

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The Power of the Poor in History. By Gustavo Gutierrez. Translated by Robert R. Barr. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1983, 256 pp., $10.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Harry Huebner

Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian Catholic theologian, is no doubt one of the foremost spokespersons for Latin American Liberation Theology. This movement, which LaVerne Rutschman says "faithfully reflects many Anabaptist emphases" ("Latin American Liberation Theology and Radical Anabaptism," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 19:1, Winter 1982, p. 42) is one which ought to be given serious attention, not only because it affects the church politically but especially because it raises basic questions about the theology and social function of the church.

The Power of the Poor in History is an important book. It holds out the promise of providing a new theological perspective for combining the power of the poor with a theology for social change—an integration which is both timely and theologically significant. In the past, poverty has been lamented; the rich nations, in complicity with the church, have been condemned for producing it. But seldom, aside from the traditional call to violent revolution, are the poor ones viewed as themselves redemptive agents of social change. Even more seldom is this done from the standpoint of an integrated Christian theology.

In recent decades we have grown accustomed to theological reflection in combination with a Marxist social analysis. Gutierrez accepts this point of departure. Yet he is cognizant of the dangers of reductionism, reducing theology to social and political analysis. Nonetheless, theological reflection is a "second act," he argues, the "first act" being the commitment to the process of liberation. This is, in fact, what for Gutierrez becomes the defining characteristic of Liberation Theology—theological reflection after committing yourself to "a preferential option for the poor."

The Power of the Poor in History pulls together a variety of essays, some of which were first written as early as the late '60s. This is both a strength and a weakness. It makes the book simultaneously eclectic and repetitious. One waits in vain for an integrated and unified treatment of this most important topic.

On the other hand it affords the reader the opportunity of seeing Gutierrez's influence in shaping the outcome of such important events as Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979). Here one can see his persistent hand which forges the thesis that Christian theology is of necessity liberating theology. Oppressors cannot be Christian despite their oft-time confession to the contrary. The role of the Christian church,

therefore, is to be unequivocally biased. It is to side squarely with the unliberated ones in the world, and in so doing it changes the social and economic structures which undergird oppression.

Two themes in this book are of special significance for theologians of the Northern Hemisphere, since they touch on issues currently being debated here: the method of theology, and the nature of God. The last two chapters of the book are of particular interest in this regard since here Gutierrez dialogues with mainline Western theologians in an effort to address these topics.

For Gutierrez, Christian theology is first and foremost theology "from the underside of history." This has several implications. It means that proper theology is in tension with the spirit of modernity (the enlightenment) where questions like "How can I understand?" and "How can I become individually free?" are dominant. Yet, this very spirit has been determinative in the shaping of both Protestant and Catholic theology, particularly Protestant theology.

Moreover, coupled with the intense desire to control the world, the false rationalism of the enlightenment has led to a marriage of the bourgeois aspect of society and the church, resulting in the most pervasive and diabolic theological heresy of all time. Only one modern theologian—Dietrich Bonhoeffer—was able to break the stranglehold of this momentum. And this was because he himself became one of the sufferers, revolutionizing his conception of God.

Gutierrez introduces this new conception of God at the end of his book, suggesting its revolutionary theological import. He quotes Bonhoeffer approvingly:

> *God lets himself be pushed out of the world and onto the cross. He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the way, the only way, in which he is with us and helps us. Mt. 8:17 makes it quite clear that Christ helps us not by virtue of his omnipotence, but by virtue of his weakness and suffering* (p. 180).

This book is exciting in what it points toward but disappointing in what it actually delivers. There is little question that Gutierrez gives a sound critique of the established churches. Furthermore, his reference to Bonhoeffer's "suffering God" is fascinating, although he leaves the reader dangling in anticipation of integrating this concept with Liberation Theology.

The reader is left guessing on some important questions. Since the title of the book suggests the efficacious power of the poor in changing social structures, how does this relate to a theology of the weakness and suffering of God? Do we have here yet another exhibition of the traditional theological imagination which stymies even the theologian who denounces it? Does God's weakness indeed have no modeling relevance for our own quest to overcome oppression? Is the cross of Christ merely a pointer to the evil which itself must be overcome by other means? Or is the way of the non-retaliatory cross not itself simultaneously redemptive and efficacious? If so, it can have no complicity with the far less effective way of violence, precisely because the latter is not the way of the suffering God. This is so even if (especially since) it is the way of the oppressor.

This is the most stimulating yet of Gutierrez's works. Nothing comes closer to developing a Liberation Theology based on the way of the cross. It holds up the *comunidades de base* as the new form of the church—the vehicle of change for the Latin-American poor. Perhaps here are the makings of a new reformation!

Nevertheless, the theological model which is to guide this change is not developed. The reader is left wondering why Gutierrez did not make the motif of the suffering God the paradigm for the **way** of the church. Only then can one have a viable Christian theology of revolution. One hopes that this may be the topic of Gutierrez's next work.

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We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People. By Gustavo Gutierrez. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1984, 108 pp., $7.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Harry Huebner

Already in his *A Theology of Liberation* Gutierrez spoke of the spirituality of liberation (cf. pp. 203-08). But this was only the beginning. In *We Drink from Our Own Wells* he expands the theme of the inextricable connection between spirituality and liberation.

Some would find it surprising that someone as oriented to social activism as Gutierrez would write a book on spirituality. But this bespeaks a fundamental, albeit prevalent, misunderstanding of both the notions of spirituality and Christian social action. We are accustomed to thinking of spirituality in individualistic terms with its emphasis on the inner life. It implies retreat from the physical to a private and insular encounter with God.

Gutierrez rejects such reductionism. To embrace spirituality is to embrace the life and character of Jesus Christ. It is to proclaim and live the good news that love and forgiveness are stronger than exploitation and oppression.

Drawing on both the classical spiritualists (St. John of the Cross, St. Benedict, St. Francis, St. Ignatius, and the Latin-American religious such as Archbishop Oscar Romero), Gutierrez tries to hold the always repelling notions of grace and works—planning for effective social change and submitting all to God in prayer—together. "As a matter of fact, our spirituality is our methodology" (p. 136).

The whole point of the book is to develop an integrated and holistic theology of salvation, one with equal concern for the personal and the social. For the Christian, to know Christ is to follow after him, to be Christlike. Hence, what we know—our theology—is shown by the life we live, by the character we manifest, by the spirit that drives us. To have experienced conversion is to have committed oneself to a life in a whole new social reality.

The book is divided into three parts. In the first part Gutierrez draws attention to the new way of being Christian in Latin America, or, as he puts it, to a new spirituality. He sees this as a collective spirituality which can better be understood as the church of Jesus Christ, living out its call to embody the spirit of Jesus in a world of poverty and oppression.

In the second part he examines the Scriptures, particularly Paul, to discern the meaning of "walking according to the Spirit." He argues that a Pauline view of spirituality is the acceptance of our filiation with God the Father. As children of God, we live out the character of God's love for the poor.

The third part includes a wealth of testimonies of current Latin-American Christians under the topics of conversion, gratuitousness, joy, spiritual childhood, and community. The reader cannot help but be overwhelmed by the profound spirituality of the poor. People who have lived with the poor often speak of having encountered God. It should also not be surprising that Jesus called the poor blessed, defining the very kingdom by reference to their spirit.

We Drink from Our Own Wells is a beautiful gift to the self-sufficient and independent "Northern Kingdom." It calls us to open our hearts to a wellspring of grace and freedom, both of which cannot be procured. Yet once they are appropriately received as gifts, they cement us in solidarity with the suffering poor. This book exposes the poverty of the rich. As Henri Nouwen so sensitively writes in the foreword, "What is happening in the Christian communities in Latin America is part of God's way of calling us in the North to conversion."

This truly fine book should be read by all North American Christians.

Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Making of a Mind. By John J. Ansbro. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984, 352 pp., $11.95, (pb).

Reviewed by Robert L. Ramseyer

This is a careful, painstaking examination of the academic influences on the thought of Martin Luther King, Jr. Ansbro carefully considers the teachers under whom King studied and the books on which King seems to have relied in order to trace the development of his thought. This book then contains not only the thought of King himself but also has extensive quotations from and analyses of the thought of a long list of theologians and philosophers.

Chapter headings give the major themes covered—the redemptive power of *agápe*, the dimensions of divine providence, the sacredness of human personality, the moral obligation to resist collective evil, the social mission of the Christian church, responses to collective evil, and rejection of violent resistance. Readers of *Mission Focus* will probably find the sections on the social mission of the church and on the rejection of violence particularly helpful.

The major weakness of the book is that it almost totally ignores the non-academic and non-literary influences on King's thought. It is as if he was shaped only by what went on in the classroom and library. One looks in vain for family, friends, church, and community, for the social currents in which he lived. While it is perhaps not fair to criticize a book for not doing what its author never intended it to do, we are left in this book with a strange picture of what goes into "the making of a mind."

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Creeds, Society, and Human Rights: A Study in Three Cultures. By Max L. Stackhouse. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984, 320 pp., $19.95.

Reviewed by Howard J. Loewen

According to Stackhouse, professor of social ethics at Andover Newton Theological School, the world is in the midst of a great cultural struggle. The question of human nature as human rights is at the center of this crisis. In order to bring change to the human condition we must first understand the governing beliefs and social structures in the different world cultures.

Using a highly interdisciplinary method, Stackhouse attempts to attach his discussion to the basic issues in religious ethics and to cross-cultural concerns in a first-, second-, and third-world culture: modern America (democratic society), Marxist East Germany (socialist society), and Hindu India (traditionalist society).

Stackhouse contends that the modern American view of human nature and rights is located in a moral vision rooted in the biblical tradition, developed by conciliar Catholics and the Liberal-Puritan synthesis, and presently sustained by ecumenical Protestants and Catholics, Reformed Jews, and some neo-Evangelicals and principled liberals. Here human rights rests on a public theology which sees humanity as sinners standing under the power and moral law of God.

The Marxist creed represents the second great revolutionary tradition of modernity. In this tradition human agency alone is fully responsible for constructing and coordinating the norms, plans, and structures of society. The central structure displacing the church is the political party as the one true church which mediates the means of salvation to the people. The basic creed is a materialistic, humanistic one. Humans assume godly power in making absolute decisions. Here human rights rest on a civic religion.

In India, where modern developments have led to a Hindu Renaissance involving the interfacing of traditional values with modern ideas, religion and family continue to be the foundations of Hindu life, the absolute center of social life. Family is key to understanding stability and change in this society. Religion itself is familial in orientation. Thus the primary sense of the holy community remains in the extended family. The understanding of family, society, and therefore of human rights is governed here by a "social spirituality" which holds that we shall always be what we are in the cosmic order.

For Stackhouse the Western moral vision as carried forward by the Liberal-Puritan synthesis is most true and should be adopted universally. It preserves the freedom of religion, maintains the equality of all people, espouses a greater duty to the disadvantaged, possesses a foundation to be self-critical, and allows for greater social space for the church to be a reforming institution.

The importance of this monumental study lies in the scope and the depth of its cross-cultural analysis; the rehabilitation it gives to social ethics for understanding and fulfilling the mission of the church in the world, especially in relation to the human rights question; and in the significance it places on the free church tradition as the carrier of a distinctive moral vision for human rights and for the role of the church in society. Its vulnerability lies in its understanding of the relationship between the religious ethic of the Christian church and the moral values of Western culture.

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Sharing Jesus in the "Two Thirds" World. By Viney Samuel and Chris Sugden. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984, 294 pp., $12.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Hans Kasdorf

Barely have we learned to speak in terms of First World, Second World, Third World, and Fourth World (p. 151) when we are confronted with a new set of paradigms describing the world in terms of fractions rather than wholes. We now talk about the Two Thirds World and the One Third World.

What that means is this: The Two Thirds World refers to the more than three billion people who are poor, oppressed, and powerless and live on 13 percent of the world's resources; they are the have-nots. The One Third World refers to approximately one billion people who possess and control 87 percent of the world's resources; they are the haves. This book deals with the first category but has a message for both.

From March 10-15, 1982, some twenty evangelical mission theologians from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin, as well as Anglo America, met in Bangkok to reflect on and discuss christological issues which are emerging in the Two Thirds World. Their objective was to learn from the Scriptures and each other how to share the gospel most effectively among the peoples of the Two Thirds World around the globe.

The volume is made up of the fourteen papers read by the participants, a preface by David Gitari who chaired the conference, and

an introduction and a conclusion by the editors. The findings are expressed in a concise chapter (pp. 277-79) entitled "Towards a Missiological Christology in the Two Thirds World." That alone is worth the price of the whole book and mandatory reading for anyone interested in evangelical mission theology as understood by church leaders of the Two Thirds World.

There is a message for the church that wants to be involved in world mission. The burden is imbedded in the question as to how Jesus Christ can be most effectively shared with peoples living in a variety of sociopolitical and socioreligious contexts. Orlando Costas sees the answer in "the formulation of christological categories and themes that are in many ways indigenous to the Two Thirds World and are congruent with the New Teatament witness" (p. 8). In other words, the gospel must be contextualized to be effective. Such is the perspective of each essay.

Kwame Bediako appeals for a fresh approach in proclaiming Jesus in the context of African traditional religions as well as that of the historical forces which have shaped the African mentality during the past 200 years (pp. 81-82).

Samuel and Sugden ask that the Christian church seriously consider what they call an "agenda for dialogue" (p. 135) in sharing the gospel with peoples of other faiths in the Asian context without compromising "the uniqueness and universality of Christ" (p. 138).

In two separate essays Padilla and Saracco of Argentina challenge the evangelicals to a radical commitment to Christ which assumes inclusion of social and political issues in proclaiming Jesus as Liberator and Transformer of life (pp. 12, 33).

Yuasa of Brazil and Cortes of Mexico talk about ways certain religious components of Indian, Iberian, and African traditions have shaped "popular religiosity" which undermines the essence of being kingdom people in the world today (pp. 50, 59). They help us understand the situation and suggest ways to work redemptively within it.

One of the most penetrating essays is by Ali of Pakistan. He develops a Christian view of Christ from "within a Muslim socio-cultural situation" (p. 141). He states that "Christ's obedience is surely the most effective way to begin talking to the Muslims about the atonement" (p. 150).

I have three critical observations about the book. First, in his keynote address Orlando Costas presents an excellent historical background to this conference. That is helpful. But when he comes to the issues relevant to proclaiming Christ in the Two Thirds World, he reverts to his usual agenda: he places the blame for the distortion of the gospel and the "disfiguration of Jesus" in Asia, Africa, and Latin America on the Western missionaries of the past (pp. 4-8). Could Costas not serve his present generation more effectively if he were more constructive in tone and approach, rather than repeat what he has said and written so many times?

Second, contextualization of the gospel is a useful concept in our time. But the process of contextualization is not without hazards. Is there not the risk of disfiguring Jesus as much as Western theologians have done when christological themes are now formulated to adapt them to indigenous religions?

Finally, the book lacks an index. Why do authors or editors not provide their readers with an adequate index to enhance the book's usefulness and value?

Hans Kasdorf is Director of the Church Mission Institute and Associate Professor of World Mission at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Pursuing Justice in a Sinful World. By Stephen V. Monsma. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984, 100 pp., $5.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Mark Siemens

There is much to be valued in this book by a former political science professor and Michigan state legislator. Stephen V. Monsma argues that Christians need to be more directly involved in political action because government is God's means of bringing about a more just society.

Monsma makes a strong biblical case for a concept of justice as fair treatment and equal opportunity for all. His starting point, "that men and women are created by God in his image to be free, loving, creative, joyful beings, living lives of praise to God and service to others," can be affirmed despite the limiting use of the masculine pronoun.

The author asserts that the Old Testament Israelite leaders are valid models for political involvement and that God's ordering of government in Romans 13 provides the basis for Christian political activity today. Though this book does not ground its arguments deeply in biblical scholarship (indeed, there is no scholarly apparatus at all), one senses that Monsma is honestly attempting to discern the meaning of Scripture for North American politics.

The book is not moralistic or simplistic but deals fairly with the complexity of political struggles. Some of its strongest passages are Monsma's descriptions of ethical dilemmas faced by politicians, in which he shows his ability to be self-critical. The author helpfully describes several levels of political involvement, recognizing that not all people are called to political activism.

The book also has problematic aspects. Monsma too easily assumes that God's granting of authority to government implies the necessity of Christian involvement in government. He emphasizes government as God's instrument of justice to the almost total exclusion of prayer, the action and witness of the church, and individual and group acts of conscience.

There is a tendency toward triumphalism, as though all societal problems could be resolved if only there were enough Christians in politics. Monsma does not address the possibility that government is one of the "powers of this dark world" in Ephesians 6:12, though this verse is quoted in the book and would appear to undercut the author's case for involvement in government.

Overseas workers will be challenged by this call to political action but will not be able to act politically as expatriates. Citizens of many countries will not find the book germane because the North American political milieu is among its presuppositions.

Its weaknesses notwithstanding, this book is important reading for North American Christians who are concerned with seeing Jesus' lordship as extending to politics.

Mark Siemens is a part-time instructor at Fresno (California) Pacific College. He served five years as director for Mennonite Central Committee in West Bank and two years in Zaire with the Mennonite Brethren Christian Service Program.

Editorial

In a recent *New Republic* Martin Peretz reflects on what it means to be an observant Jew at Harvard University today. Peretz uses Harvard as symbol of the great center of intellectual power and rationality which needs account to no other body or being.

Peretz observes that today it is easier than ever before to be a Jew. But, paradoxically, it is also harder than ever to be a Jew of faith. While the absence of external threats and barriers makes it easy to follow one's faith, Peretz concludes "that Jews—freed from hostile stigmata and surroundings and therefore from the compulsion to construct psychological and spiritual encampments—are destined to an ever more impoverished group existence." Yet Jews are free as never before to openly own their roots and identity.

It was not always so at Harvard. Twenty-five years ago Jews observed high holy days as inconspicuously as possible. Today four congregations, representing the four main streams of Judaism, gather regularly on campus; and on special festivals throngs attend. But Peretz does not discern great faith in those who assemble. Rather, "they are stirred by the primordial sounds of the *shofar*, the ram's horn blown as an evocation of the mystery of creation, a reminder of the wanderings of Exile and a call to penitence." These highly educated Jews are not educated in the faith, observes Peretz. The question is: what staying power does any movement have which no longer knows and lives by its spiritual roots? The forms survive but the great mystery of faith no longer grips the faithful. They gather more out of a nostalgia for the past than a compelling call to follow the "pillar" and the "cloud." Peretz offers his reflections in full awareness that what is happening to the Jew in North America is not unique to the Jew. Nearly all religious and ethnic groups face a similarly precarious future.

Recently *Newsweek* interviewed the eminent historian of religion, Mircea Eliade. In Eliade's view the history of religion should serve to help moderns appreciate the spiritual creativity and aliveness of long-forgotten ancestors and thus establish the fundamental contribution of religion to human achievement. Eliade attacks those who want to demythologize religion and secularists who discount religion altogether. In the desacralized cultures of the West some vestiges of the sacred persist but what remains either veers off into the bizarre or exists as archaic forms which no longer exert power in shaping culture.

In general we have lost our capacity for experiencing the sacred and for being captivated by the transcendent. "Contemporary churches and temples are more museums than shrines of the sacred." Our rituals do not convey the power they once had. Religion which survives in the West is primarily a religion of the individual to be treated as a private matter having little social meaning.

Religion is viewed primarily in instrumental terms: what it will do for me. This is a giant step from the primal religious understanding wherein religion was the very womb of life which defined and sustained human existence.

This fundamental shift in worldview has a direct bearing on evangelization, nurture, and worship. And we need to ask ourselves some hard questions about what we are doing in practice and what we ought to be doing in light of biblical faith.

Evangelization is supposed to be the act of inviting men and women to faith in Jesus Christ. Pop evangelism which is professionally attuned to the modern worldview promises people what they want: health, happiness, and prosperity. The message of Jesus Christ was about a kingdom founded on a cross which called men and women to abandon themselves into the hands of a righteous God who alone could reorder their lives around love and justice. The issue in evangelization today is whether we will be purveyors of self-fulfillment or self-surrender.

We also must think carefully about nurture in a world where the self has become the chief idol. Nurture which is biblically balanced will always be carried out in light of a twofold movement: growth in devotion to God, growth in obedience as God's servant-witnesses in the world. Every Christian ought to bear the impress of this twofold responsibility.

Empty patterns of worship will be transformed only when we begin to truly celebrate the presence of the living God in our midst. Such genuine worship cannot be created simply by turning up the volume or pursuing novelty for the sake of the new. Worship becomes real when out of our daily lives we bring those experiences in which God has been unmistakably present and witness to God's transforming power and love and grace.

Some observers speak of the "exhaustion of modernity." Too often the church seems to suffer from that same exhaustion rather than embodying and boldly declaring the mighty acts of the God who is continually present to those liberated from a worldview which has no place for the Transcendent One.
—Wilbert R. Shenk

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Normal Christianity: The Voice of Those Who Suffer

LARRY MILLER

This meditation will focus on the theme "God's people serve in hope." More specifically, it focuses on a text or a motif which might help us to understand better the biblical perspective on what it means to be a people of God serving in hope. The more I have thought about what the Bible says on our theme, the more I think it is nearly impossible for us—North American and European Mennonites—profoundly to understand what the Bible is trying to tell us. A second thought is more encouraging: there are, it seems to me, some people within the Mennonite peoplehood and the wider Christian fellowship who can help us to understand the biblical perspective. The Bible and our own history give us some clues as to where to find these people.

The people of God: a suffering people

From beginning to end the New Testament assumes that the normal situation of the people of God is one of discrimination and suffering. There may be moments of peace and tranquillity, but these are the exceptions, neither the rule nor the hope for Christians. The New Testament assumes that the disciple of Christ and the faithful church will experience hostility, rejection, discrimination, and sometimes persecution at the hands of the society in which they live. Sometimes the church will suffer because political authorities are opposed to it. Always it will suffer, says the New Testament, the opposition of family, of old friends, of colleagues at work, and perhaps of local authorities.

The fundamental reason for the hostility of the existing order to the disciple of Christ, the New Testament goes on to indicate, is not the atheism or religious intolerance of the ruling philosophers and politicians.

In the New Testament the hostility generally does not come first of all from the top, from the Roman authorities, for example. It starts with local people: family, friends, associates, local officials. It starts with those people who live daily with Christians. It starts with those people who live closely enough to them to see that conversion to Christ changes the way people act.

The New Testament paints us a picture of people—the people of God—whose conversion to Jesus Christ means that they no longer live like they used to and like the existing order expects them to. They are different, not only religiously, but ethically and socially. They have become dissidents, not conformed to the values and norms and practices of the respectable world around them. The official ideology of the Roman Empire had little against faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus. What it did not appreciate most fundamentally was nonconformity—living differently—especially when that nonconformity disturbed the existing social peace and calm.

This is the basic picture we find in the New Testament from beginning to end: the people of God is a suffering people. We find it implicitly or explicitly in the Gospels, in Paul, in John. Most of the New Testament is written from the perspective of a people of God which has experienced this kind of suffering. Much of it is addressed to churches which are experiencing—more or less severely—harassment due not only to their religious beliefs but primarily to their social nonconformity, their conformity to Christ. Most of what the New Testament says about God's people serving in hope assumes that this is a people suffering because they are viewed by society as dissidents who ought to be ostracized, harassed, and, finally, persecuted.

If this is the case in general for the New Testament, it is so most specifically and explicitly in Peter. First Peter is designed as a word of consolation and encouragement for Christians suffering social discrimination or alienation as a result of their conversion to Christ and the consequent nonconformity of their

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Larry Miller, Strasbourg, France, serves as administrator in Europe for Mennonite Board of Missions and Mennonite Central Committee. *He gave this meditation to Mennonite World Conference organization and program committees in Strasbourg on May 6, 1984. The MWC theme that year was "God's People Serve in Hope"; the official text was 1 Peter.*

lifestyle to the values of the existing order. Its aim is to motivate readers to resist pressure to social conformity, to stand fast in faith, love, and hope. When 1 Peter calls God's people to serve in hope, it is calling a suffering people to reinforce service to one another within the fellowship (4:7f.); but even more, it is calling them to serve those who harass them, the "enemy" (2:11-12; 3:9).

This is why it sometimes seems nearly impossible for many of us who live in Europe and North America to understand and believe what the New Testament (1 Peter) says on our theme, "God's people serve in hope." Where it assumes that suffering is the normal situation of the church, even in a religiously tolerant society like our own, we assume that suffering is for Christians in some other part of history or in some other part of the world. While it assumes a socially nonconformist church and the subsequent ostracism, we tend to be a respectable people and are appreciated for it. When it talks about Christian service, it does not say much about peace groups, relief agencies, or missions committees. The only hope it knows, according to 1 Peter 1:22, is the one which is based on that God whose power raised Jesus from the dead. All of this the New Testament assumes when it talks about "God's people serving in hope." It is so unlike our own experience. How can we possibly understand and believe what it teaches us?

The witness of those who have suffered

If the experience of most of us is so distant from what the New Testament calls normal, that is not the case for all Mennonite brothers and sisters around the world. There are some in our midst who live today in suffering because their conversion and conformity to Christ have brought them the hostility of the society in which they live: of family, friends, associates, authorities. They may come from Eastern Europe or East Africa. They may come from Latin America or from Asia. But there will also be some from North America and Europe.

These are the people who may be particularly helpful to us in understanding the biblical perspectives on our theme, "God's people serve in hope." When they speak, listen with special care. When you meet one of these people, take him or her to a quiet place, open your Bible to 1 Peter, and ask what that book is teaching us about how we can become a people of God who serve in hope. (You might ask too—if there is a bit of extra time—why most of us in Europe and North America today experience so seldom the hostility of the established order. Is it because that order is so Christlike? Is it because we are so little like Christ?)

In the New Testament the word for martyr and the word for witness is the same word. To suffer because of faithfulness is to be enabled to witness to the faith. In Mennonite history the voice of the Christian suffering at the hands of society has been accorded special authority. The *Martyrs Mirror*, for example, was first addressed to seventeenth-century Dutch Mennonites who were "living in expensive and ornamented houses . . . wearing clothes from foreign countries," consuming large quantities of expensive food "of which a portion naturally belongs to the poor." The author of *Martyrs Mirror* hoped that the witness of those who had suffered would incite the Mennonites of his day to greater understanding, fidelity, and nonconformity. The *Martyrs Mirror* was published in English in the same century and again in the twentieth for largely the same reasons: to help Mennonites (this time American Mennonites) tempted by the blessings of society to understand more clearly the implications of the biblical mandate to discipleship.

In earlier centuries, the writer of *Martyrs Mirror* tells us, Satan came as a persecuting roaring lion. But he comes also, the writer continues, disguised as a "kind, pleasant, even divine messenger" bearing safety and luxury. Today the devil probably does not mind at all that we in the North continue to debate our theological pedigree (is it better to be conservative, liberal, or middle of the road?) as long as we do so, walking together down the path of social conformity. For that is one of the broad ways that leads to death.

Conformed to Christ—serving in hope

If the voice of the martyrs of the past is one to which we must listen in order to become the faithful, nonconformed people of God, let us also listen with special care to the witness of those among us who suffer today. Let us do so without idealizing them and without glorifying them, for theirs is the normal Christian situation according to 1 Peter and the New Testament. Let us listen in simplicity. Let us do so in order that all together we might come to understand what it means to be God's people conformed to Christ and serving in hope.

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Becoming a Peace Church in Europe Today

WILFRIED WARNECK

The question of the Christian peace witness is not a new question for the churches in Central Europe. The experience of two world wars placed it squarely on their agenda well before the rise of today's European peace movement.

Germany provides a prime example of this fact. Deeply affected by the explosion of the A-bomb and the development of the H-bomb, "confessing church" theologians, influenced by Karl Barth, began to revise their theologies in the 1950s. Some (Helmut Gollwitzer, Friedrich Wilhelm Marquardt, Götz Harbsmeier, Ernst Wolf) retained existing theological systems and symbols while reformulating them so as to make clear that participation in anything having to do with nuclear warfare is illegitimate precisely because those systems and symbols remain true.

Thus, the just-war theory was turned against nuclear war. Others (Martin Niemöller, Jan Lochman, Kurt Scharf, Heinrich Treblin) went further; they discovered that the bomb and its implication for ethics (the impossibility of any just war in the future) must lead to a complete rethinking of the Christian faith in the direction of nonviolence and radical peace service.

In contrast, the question of becoming a peace church is new. For the established churches, becoming a peace church means renewal in all areas and at all levels of church life. It does not necessarily imply revolutionary or total discontinuity with the old system. Gradual change is not excluded perforce. But change there must be, radical and systemic change, even though it may come step by step.

The call for a reformation in this direction has only recently been heard by the church and the theological establishment in Europe. What accounts for this development? A variety of factors converged to put the peace church question on the agenda of the established churches in Europe: new thinking on ecclesiology—especially by Jürgen Moltmann—rooted in dialogue with grass-roots and basic church movements in Latin America and other parts of the world; the reference to the historic peace churches at the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Nairobi, 1975); the work of groups like Church and Peace.

"Becoming a peace church today" suggests a stimulating vision! Throughout all parts of humanity there would be one community of brothers and sisters which tries to practice consistently the love of Jesus Christ. Throughout all the nations there would be one people which no human being needs to fear. It is God's will that Cain finds peace and reconciliation. One door shall be open for him with certainty. In one community—the messianic peace community of Jesus Christ—he shall be welcomed without conditions.

Wilfried Warneck, born in 1929 in Königsberg, studied Protestant theology in Bethel and Heidelberg and is an ordained minister in the Lutheran Church of Germany. In 1959 he founded the Laurentiuskonvent, a Christian pacifist intentional community. Commissioned by the community, he has worked with organizations engaged in community organizing, peace service with ecumenical teams of volunteers (primarily in Africa), and peace research. He is presently Executive Secretary of Church and Peace. *He wishes to thank Sol Yoder, Amsterdam, and Larry Miller, Strasbourg, for improvements in the English text. This article originally was spoken in the context of a Mennonite Central Committee-sponsored East/West Study Tour in August 1984.*

What is a peace church?

It would be interesting to define the peace church in terms of the traditional *notae ecclesiae*. Thus, we could show that in reality only a pacifist church is *ecclesia una, sancta, catholica et apostolica*. For our purposes, however, that would not gain us much. I prefer a pattern which has become popular in European theology during the past sixty years. It uses the four Greek New Testament marks of *martyría, diakonía, koinonía,* and *leitourgía*. By using these terms I would like to say that a peace church is a church which lives as the peace community of Jesus Christ, celebrating the Prince of Peace. According to Scripture, the life of a peace church is characterized by authentic peace witness and peace service.

Daikonia means

- saying no to training for and the exercise of violence (particularly military violence, both individual and structural);
- saying yes to opponents in past, present, and future conflicts and living in creative communication with them ("love your enemies");
- saying yes to the victims of violence and living in solidarity with them;
- living out a form of human society which contrasts with the existing society; that is, building cell groups or community characterized by *shalom*.

Examples of these dimensions of service are

- conscientious objection and work for disarmament;
- voluntary service which promotes reconciliation, partnership, and exchange;
- sharing with the oppressed, exiles, and refugees;
- living as a community capable of making mature decisions and of acting in freedom on the basis of its own priorities and loyalties rather than those of the status quo.

The church makes decisions and acts on the basis of God's revelation. It considers all human experiences and retains those which are compatible with the gospel. In the political realm the church carries out secular work with secular groups and institutions, taking care to act in accordance with the values it receives through revelation. While acknowledging secular criteria for the evaluation of secular work, the church does not necessarily accept or follow counsel based on secular experience and analysis.

Peace church and established church: persisting points of theological dispute

No corpus Christianum

Reformers and Anabaptists alike took as their task the reformation of the church on the basis of Scripture and of Scripture alone. *Sola scriptura* did not mean that the gospel had become a new law. It meant only the exclusion of other norms for discerning truth.

Unlike the Anabaptists, however, the mainstream Reformers held that the unity of the secular community was a value in itself and that it must be preserved at all costs, at least at local and regional levels. (The impossibility of maintaining unity at the level of the entire empire was obvious to everyone.) The Reformers' belief in this value forced them to compromise the *sola scriptura* principle as it pertains to the (non-) authority of the state over the church and its life.

Thus, in contradiction to the Bible's teachings, the distinction between church and world—between church and state—was not maintained. In other words, in order to ensure the

unity of the established order, the church accepted other (nonscriptural) sources and norms for truth. (Interestingly, the reactions to accept such compromises became the criterion by which the Reformers judged the legitimacy of the Anabaptist views.)

Today a similar situation exists. Preservation of the idols which guarantee the unity of the industrialized West leads the church to destructive compromise. Belief in Western political freedom justifies the present system of nuclear deterrence and preparation for another holocaust. Hope in unlimited industrial and economic growth or scientific progress results in the abuse of nature and the destruction of the earth which we have borrowed from our children.

Fondness for liberal marketing principles contributes to the exploitation of the majority of humanity in the South—and thus to the death of forty million people annually. And Christians participate in all of this. Apparently, this value—preservation of the unity of the Western world or the readiness to make compromises which allow it—has become an additional (nonscriptural) criterion in the ethical decisions of many churches.

Christology, ecclesiology, and ethics

Historic peace church Christology underlines the importance of Jesus' earthly life. At the same time that Jesus Christ is the Christ of eternal reconciliation, he is the Jesus of the biblical reports who invites disciples to go with him on a particular way: "Follow me!" He is the only revelation of human life which corresponds to God's will.

We are familiar with Hans Denck's words: "No one can truly know Christ, if he does not follow him in life." John H. Yoder has said, "The humanity of Jesus Christ is the revelation of the norm of Christian obedience.... The ethical reflection of the Christian consists in applying the relevance of Jesus' humanity to the present situation" (Yoder, 1963:46f.). Even the details of this humanity—Jesus' political decisions, for example—are relevant for those who follow him. Yet discipleship should not be understood as law; it is participation in Christ accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

This means that Christian obedience does not result from the analysis of a given situation and the subsequent development of strategies on the basis of certain precepts. It cannot be reduced to specific forms of spirituality or to principles, not even to principles such as love or nonviolence. Christian obedience is communicated by union with Jesus Christ. It is the fruit of faith alive in the church. The obedience of the Christian and the social shape of the church cannot be theoretically described; they must always be discovered anew, step by step. This happens by participating in Jesus' messianic task, (as described in Luke 4, for example). Thus, the specific forms of discipleship which result from "applying the relevance of Jesus' humanity to the present situation" also are answers to the real needs of the poor, the oppressed, and the hopeless of the earth.

The mainstream-church Reformers tended to call *Schwärmer* those who wished to follow Jesus Christ in more than a merely spiritual dimension. Similarly and more recently, when Rudolf Bultmann, based on an incorrect exegesis of 2 Corinthians 5:16 ("We no longer know Christ *katà sárka*), affirmed that the only relevant point is the mere fact that Christ had come, he meant that the shape and style of Jesus' human life on earth are ethically irrelevant. No doubt this perspective helped prepare the reduction of faith to individual spirituality without sociopolitical consequences. Unless the ethical relevance of the human dimension and form of Jesus' life on earth is rediscovered, there is no hope for the conversion of the church to a peace church position.

In the Protestant ethics of this century, nobody has presented this as simply and as clearly as Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In his last birthday letter to Eberhard Bethge (August 1944) he said, "Again and again we must take the time for a very long and very quiet meditation on the life, the words, the deeds, the passion and the death of Jesus" (Bonhoeffer, 1970:425). He could also say it in abstract terms: "The problem of Christian ethics is the becoming real of God's revealed reality in Jesus Christ who is in the midst of his creatures (Bonhoeffer, 1984:202). Where can we find this Christ? Christian ethics becomes explicit "in the context of a concrete community, in the church, which is nothing but that portion of humanity in which Christ has really become flesh" (Bonhoeffer, 1984:89). Therefore, the church should not be the framework of civil morality. The church has to struggle for its right to become really what it is: the church. Larry Rasmussen writes: "Therefore ... the social shaping of the church itself is the central concern of Christian social ethics" (Rasmussen, 1983:154).

The foundation of the peace community (peace church) as an essential aspect of Christ's work

In the peace church understanding of the New Testament one of the constitutive elements of Christ's work is the creation of a community which contrasts with the existing society and its values. This is not the case in the mainstream churches. If I as a Lutheran child would have been asked to name the essential elements of Christ's work, I undoubtedly would have answered incarnation, cross, and resurrection. This is incorrect. Jesus' work consists not only of a certain word and a certain service but also in the foundation of a new people called out of all nations.

Indeed, according to Heinold Fast, "The Anabaptist duality of church and world is based on the faith that between the resurrection and the eschatological return of Christ the church is the place in the world where the most essential takes place" (Fast, 1982:45). The Anabaptists developed this conviction because they experienced precisely that kind of church.

Such a church is able to serve the world in hope. Abstention from political participation needs to be neither escape from nor lack of solidarity with the world but a sign of a certain priority. Should we invest our energies in the society which passes away or in the new, coming one? Because we are so busy serving in love the cause of peace and inviting people into the kingdom, there is often little time left for conventional power play.

Authentic service for peace requires a decision of the whole church to commit itself to such a service. Church members sent with a mandate by the church carry out the service. But the basis for action is, as we have said, a decision of the church. Making decisions of such importance requires a church which is trained in making decisions. Also, the brother or sister sent out must be sure that the group, the community, or the church is based on a trustworthy covenant and will not be closed one day.

We can easily see how closely pacifist ethics and communitarian ecclesiology are linked. The Reformers opted for the existing anonymous church which was identical to society. Therefore they had to integrate and to baptize the violent behavior of everybody fighting for survival. The same is true today of most church leaders in the mainstream churches in Europe. That is one reason why it is so difficult for us to become peace churches. Jesus is not seen as the founder of the peace community, an alternative society.

Ways of change

Transformation of the church through networks of innovation groups

The traditional instruments of influencing institutions are being used in an attempt to reform our churches: speaking, writ-

ing, active participation in the Protestant Kirchentag and the Katholikentag, seminars of church-related study centers, cooperation with professors, direct talks with responsible people. However, in the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, most of the churches are such big institutions that they show only a minimum of flexibility. (This is true of the Roman Catholic Church everywhere.) The mechanisms for maintaining the status quo are strong; positions, jobs, juridical regulations, and a lot of money are tied to it. The number of church members favorable to real change is indeed small.

Nevertheless, there are examples of churches involved in learning processes. Theories of collective learning as well as the analysis of such processes show that nonviolent change even of bigger groups is possible if there are impulse or innovation groups and if these groups are acting in the right way. These are cell groups which ensure communication and interpretation of interaction or of events, including a message of change. Such groups must

- show an honest interest in interaction and dialogue with the existing institutions;
- know and use the language and the symbols which are necessary so that the partner can understand;
- be—in their life—authentic representatives of the message they want to communicate.

The success of the learning process depends much on the size of the supply of common symbols. Indeed, in the case of acute conflict, the existence of an adequate supply of common symbols is vital for peacemaking. Otherwise, mistrust will result. Further, common symbols cannot be obtained by reflection or by speaking only. Common experiences (working together for others) are necessary since it is impossible for big institutions as a whole to have such experiences; innovation groups can, to a certain extent, take their place. To accomplish this, the innovation group may have to sacrifice part of its sense of identity and authenticity.

A further hypothesis is that the impact of the impulse groups potentially is greater if they do not live and work in isolation but as networks. Examples of this one are the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) and the European movement, "Living without the protection of armament." Networks must find the balance between extroverted activism and introverted enjoyment of the common life. They are successful in as far as they consist of groups whose members invest their whole life—including work location and money—in the task of transforming church or society. That is why we believe in the effectiveness of a network composed of intentional and basic communities or similar groups.

Church and Peace understands itself to be such a network. Its experience of the past ten years can be summarized as follows:

- There is in Europe vital interest in authentic information on the peace church approach.
- European Quakers and Mennonites are not yet really interested in cooperation with one another.
- Members and associates of Church and Peace from extremely different confessional backgrounds have developed deep and sincere friendships.
- Unity grows through common experiences in service. We believe that an intentional combination of theoretical dialogue and practical peace service can help to foster creative and far-reaching processes of renewal.

Selective reinforcement in theological learning processes: the case of "open margins"

More and more frequently theological systems have open margins. The doctrine of justification through (the cross and the resurrection of) Jesus Christ—the very center of Protestant faith—is no longer understood as unrelated to political and sociostructural choices. Again and again today it is understood to lead either to a position of radical pacifism or to a position of situational or relative pacifism. Open margins of this sort are points where it is urgent to ask precisely to enter the debate and to give input from the peace church experience and perspective.

Service for peace an authentic dimension of the diakonía *of the church*

Peace churches have contributed to the ecumenical family the pattern of voluntary service for peace and justice. The Protestant churches of Germany have developed avant-garde models of peace service (e.g., Aktion Sühnezeichen) and contribute relatively much money to them. Yet they are hesitating to integrate these organizations into the structure of the church or to view peace service as normative.

It is evident that the communication of historic peace church experiences to the mainstream churches could contribute significantly to the process of rethinking and remodeling the church's involvement in the service of its members. The importance of this should not be overlooked. After all, service for peace is the Christian equivalent of warfare. This is neither clearly declared by the peace churches nor understood by the Constantinian churches.

Participation in ongoing conflicts in church politics

A further fruitful approach in assisting the churches in the struggle to become more credible in their peace witness is participation in the discussion of key contemporary issues. Examples of such issues from the West German context are revision of the policy governing the service of military chaplains, legislation on the matter of conscientious objection and alternative service, civil disobedience as a democratic instrument, and an appropriate response to the apartheid regime in South Africa and Namibia.

Diverse approaches, *shalom*, prayer

There is no promising one-track approach by which the mainstream churches will become peace churches. A long process touching different sectors at the same time is necessary. Doctrine and public witness, peace service and nonviolent action, political action and making decisions in church politics, prayer, and celebration are all areas in which one must be ready to work. No one can say in which field the breakthrough will take place. However, progress in Europe cannot happen without ecumenical and intercontinental support. Stimulation from other denominations, countries, and contexts can have an enormous power of inspiration.

Most important will be the encouragement coming from the united witness and example of the historic peace churches. If the peace churches do not unite worldwide in a unambiguous witness for peace, everyone will conclude that it is impossible for the church to live for an extended period as a peace church. If the peace churches do not find again their original motivation and drive, there is little hope for the reformation of the Constantinian churches.

Second, the struggle for the true peace witness can be won only if peace really means *shalom*—i.e., if it includes an effort to live in true solidarity with the "wretched of the earth" (Frantz Fanon), the struggle for worldwide justice as well as a new partnership with the earth and the living beings on it. Concretely this will mean new ecumenical forms of living and acting together with the churches of the third world.

Finally, prayer (deepening our love of Christ and our life

with him), meditation, and celebration are more essential than progress on issues of doctrine. The experience of massive death behind us and the threat of still more massive death and murder before us require being at home in God's future—a future which can never be reached by reflection, theories, or strategies. Maybe it is already too late. But Christ is before everything, even before the earliest bomb and rocket. He wants us to be with him in his being before and beyond the power of fear and death.

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Statement of Self-Understanding of Church and Peace

The following "Statement of Self-Understanding of Church and Peace" was accepted at the meeting of the Church and Peace Administrative Committee in Römlinghoven, Germany, May 25-26, 1982. The committee understands it is a basis of association for members of Church and Peace, and commends it for discussion, periodic review, and revision when needed.

1. Church and Peace is an association of Christian [Catholic, Protestant, historic peace churches] communities, churches, organizations, and individuals who believe that peace testimony and witness are essential characteristics of the church of Jesus Christ. In the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus we see the transforming power of a life lived without weapons, even in a country suffering military occupation and extreme repression. Without injuring or threatening anyone, Jesus gave witness to a way of life that shares, that refuses wealth, that creates community, that heals and reconciles, and that values each person. Healing one of those arresting him, forgiving those who condemned and executed him, he revealed in the resurrection that God's victory is in the power of love rather than weapons. In Church and Peace we commit ourselves to live together this example of disarmed and reconciling life, and again and again to be challenged and corrected by it. Unceasingly we ask ourselves: How are we Christians accepting, living, and sharing the peace of Christ?

2. Church and Peace understands itself as

a forum, a place of contact and exchange, a point of coming together of groups, communities, and churches, a place of theological reflection, of prayer and praise;

a catalyst for Christian peace testimony. This means that Church and Peace

- asks its members how they develop the peace testimony in their life and work,
- seeks to find the most important themes for common study and action, which will be a challenge and stimulation to churches and Christian communities,
- provides a channel through which members and church congregations can communicate opportunities to assist each other in peacework and, through the Ploughshare Fund, a means to support the work of peacemaking,
- makes available materials which can be useful for the Christian peace ministry,
- pays attention to differences of understanding and approach between members, encouraging encounter and discussion so that the groups can gain from the experience and example of other members.

Church and Peace does not see itself as fully responsible for the coordination of all such efforts, but rather as a service available to member churches and communities. This does not exclude Church and Peace from taking initiatives itself, if capacities are available.

3. In Christian discipleship, we in Church and Peace commit ourselves

- to communicate the gospel;
- to celebrate the lordship of Jesus Christ, his presence among us, and his kingdom of peace, through common life, silent contemplation, prayer, praise, and public witness;
- to seek solidarity with and to support the victims of injustice, hatred, and violence;
- to refuse to make weapons or to be trained in violence, to refuse to kill our fellow humans, to refuse racism and nationalism;
- to actively love opponents in past, present, or threatened conflicts, approaching "the enemy" with imaginative attention and hope.

Through Jesus Christ we are led to a new way of life:

- to a life of sharing and community;
- to practice forgiveness and reconciliation within family and community;
- to discover one another's gifts in structures of co-responsibility and communal decision-making;
- to see that of God in each person, and to especially value the handicapped, the imprisoned, and all those who are rejected or kept at a distance;
- to invest imagination and resources in peace service, research, and education in nonviolent resolution of conflict;
- to work for the changeover of war industry to peace employment;
- to seek interchurch and international understanding, exchange and reconciliation;
- and to contribute to the development of a theology of sharing and peace.

4. The **instruments** of Church and Peace are:

- a permanent coordinating secretariat,
- organizing conferences, seminars, and other meetings,
- producing publications and arranging lectures,
- undertaking service and action appropriate to the purposes of Church and Peace.

Becoming a Peace Church Today: A Dutch Mennonite View

KEES VAN DUIN

For nearly two decades in the Netherlands, the Interchurch Peace Council (IKV)[1] has mobilized many people against the madness of preparing for nuclear war. In 1981 a crowd of 400,000 civilians and soldiers demonstrated in Amsterdam against the stationing of new nuclear missiles on Dutch territory. Their slogan was: "Rid the World of Nuclear Weapons, Beginning with the Netherlands." In 1983 The Hague was the scene of an even larger demonstration. This time 500,000 people took part. This phenomenon became known as "hollanditis" and spread across Europe; undeniably it was catching. In this mass movement the IKV was the prime motor.

Along with my positive feelings about this massive outburst of protest, I cannot help being concerned about the lack of a real Mennonite voice in this movement or, to put it more correctly, about the lack of biblical foundation and reflection in the IKV. I cannot help seeing the interchurch peace movement as a continuation—in a progressive form—of that kind of ecclesiastical political thinking which had its beginning with Constantine in the fourth century. Constantinianism has not really faded away, in spite of ideas to the contrary, precisely in those progressive Christian circles involved in the contemporary peace movement.

Constantinianism continued

Generally speaking, the Christian peace movement of recent years must be characterized as a form of progressive or neo-Constantinianism. The age-old marriage of church to state, dating from Constantine, has had mainly a conservative character: the church provides the religious sanction for the established power. Today, however, we see opposition and criticism coming from churches and Christian movements. They are turning against the politics of their countries. Nevertheless—and this testifies to their persistent Constantinian character—they continue to expect governments and authorities to be the source of political and military change, improvement and renewal, good politics instead of bad, peace instead of war. This expectation makes clear, in spite of the criticism and opposition, that there has been no real break with the Constantinian tradition of governmental churches.

True, one cannot imagine IKV people blessing weapons; they reject them, at least partially. Yet, peace and security are expected to come from the state—from political powers. The declarations of the church peace movement show that progressive members of the churches with a governmental tradition (Roman Catholics, Calvinists) believe in the possibility of world peace without abandoning the system of states. Many progressive Mennonites share this perspective. The presupposition of the IKV is the necessity and desirability of the existence of the state. For it, the absence of the state is inconceivable. In this respect the peace movement is fundamentally conformist, all of its criticism of national policies not withstanding.

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Arms race to be expected

The pursuit of a peaceful world of states is like the attempt to square a circle. We will elucidate and explain this second thesis with general arguments only. We will examine the biblical data later at greater length.

Power, coercion, domination, and violence are not accidental characteristics of the state. They are essential marks of it, independent of how good a given state may be. A characteristic of the state is to think and act in terms of power. The state system is therefore unsuitable as a framework to secure peace and justice for humanity.

Never before the twentieth century did states so plainly disqualify themselves as guardians and keepers of justice, security, and peace: World War I and II, preparation for World War III, cold war, the arms race, holocaust, systematic torture, apartheid (cf. Serres, 1974:73-104). The twentieth century provides an abundance of illustrations of the old paradox of the state: the antagonism of justice and violence-power are supposedly brought into coexistence. But the coexistence is not real. Pascal has described the situation: "Power could not be given to justice, because power contradicted justice and called justice injustice. And so, unable to make justice powerful, they made the powerful right" (Pascal, my translation).[2]

Waging war to establish peace or to make the world safe for democracy is a social theory falsified by history. Playing the game of power politics to bring an end to power politics is an illusion and self-deceit. In human and social affairs the means chosen determine the goals reached. Only in technical and physical matters is it the other way around: the chosen goal dictates the means (Suys, 1955).

It is inconsistent and illusory to expect the state—functioning in a net of states, in a framework of armament and power politics—to abstain from the strongest weapons available. In our unsafe world, the state feels morally obliged toward all its citizens, including those who criticize it, to do its utmost in the arms race.

The people-of-God story

The people of God—the community of the faithful—is the alternative to the world of states and was intended to be so from the outset. The church—the people of God—is a stranger in this world not because its true home is in heaven but because the state still rules and dominates on earth. The state is based on terror and coercion, not on justice and truth. The temporary coexistence of the new order and the old order is impossible and ungodly, but out of sheer necessity it has to be endured. The vocation of the community of the faithful is not to reform the world of states, let alone to remodel it according to divine commandments or even to act as its prophetic partner (Barth, 1946: 9, 10, 11, 20, 40; Marsch, 1968; Laeuchli, 1968). The roots of biblical nonviolence and nonresistance and the roots also of the prophetic vision of universal peace lie in maintaining distance from the world of states.

The Exodus from Egypt

The historical hour of birth of the people of God is essentially the departure out of the state, the farewell to human order based on power, domination, and violence. The history of faith, i.e., of the people of God, begins with the Exodus out of Egypt.

It would be a misunderstanding of the biblical narrative to take the name of Egypt as nothing more than the historico-geographical designation of the accidental scene of the drama. In the biblical narrative Egypt is the state, the power structure. The Exodus is not liberation from some vaguely defined situation of slavery. It is the most stable and best organized state of antiquity which is the house of bondage, the slave-holding despot. The heart of the matter therefore is this: Israel's Exodus is deliverance from the state.[3]

Further, the story about this Exodus is the basic story of Israel. The event told is the origin and lasting foundation of the existence and the history of this people. Israel understands its own being and continued existence as incompatible with the body politic and, as a consequence, as the alternative to the state, i.e., the order based on violence. In the book of Exodus, in the Old Testament (the Bible of Jesus), the state is disqualified as the framework in which human life can be done justice (Exod. 2; 23; 15; Ps. 89:11; Job 9:13; 26:12; Isa. 30:7; 51:9) (Isbell, 1982:50; Gottwald 1979:509).

In Exodus a state with a human face is apparently not considered to be a real possibility. Moses' effort to accomplish justice inside the Egyptian situation failed completely. Afterward he no longer pleaded for better labor conditions or better treatment. He could have fought for a weekly day off. He might have tried striking to extract improvements. He did nothing of the sort. The Exodus declares that there is, in the state, no room for justice or for human life in the full sense of these words.

More evidence in the book of Exodus supports this view. Israel was kept in state slavery, not economic slavery. The Hebrews were state property. The building projects they were forced to carry out point in this direction. In negotiations on behalf of his people, Moses did not address the employers or the employers' representatives; he addressed Pharaoh, the head of state, the state in person. And in the final act of the drama the complete armed force of Egypt was called into battle.

More is to be said, however. Israel not only considered itself **an** alternative to the state of Egypt; evidently it thought of itself as **the** alternative to the state. The Old Testament community of faith did not expect a place amid the states; in one way, it expected to take the place of the states.

Israel was certainly conscious of the importance and impact of its deliverance. The biblical story of the Exodus not only records Israel's farewell to the state of Egypt. It also proclaims that its liberation means the end of the state of Egypt and, in principle, the end of all states.

The structure of the end of the Exodus story is suggestive in this respect; the destruction of Egypt's military (state) power is not the condition for Israel's liberty. It is the other way around: Israel's freedom is the cause of Egypt's fall. First comes the Exodus. After that, Pharaoh and his host come to their end.[4] The song in Exodus 15 contains several verses expressing this conviction. As a consequence of Israel's liberation from Egypt, the world of states is shaking on its foundations:

The peoples have heard, they tremble;
pangs have seized on the inhabitants[5] of Philistia.
Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed;
the leaders of Moab, trembling seizes them;
all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.
Terror and dread fall upon them;
because of the greatness of thy arm they are as still as a stone.
(Exod. 15:14-16, RSV).

In this context one has to read also Psalm 114:

When Israel came out of Egypt,
the House of Jacob from a foreign[6] nation,
Judah became his sanctuary
and Israel his domain.
The sea fled at the sight,
the Jordan stopped flowing,
the mountains skipped like rams,
and like lambs the hills. . . .
Quake, earth, at the coming of your Master"
(Ps. 114:1-4, 7, Jer. Bible)

In the poetry of the ancient Near East mountains are often the symbol of political power (Jer. 51:25; Isa. 2:2). The context makes clear that it is not for joy that they skip, but from fear. The Old Testament as a whole should be read as document of Israel's perpetual struggle with its "statelessness."[7]

The origins of Old Testament Israel are generally held to have been of pre-state character. Israel is purported to have evolved gradually from primitive-nomadic clan to tribe, to combination of tribes, and finally to existence as a state. The Old Testament seems to permit this view. The book of Exodus, however, when read on its own terms, tells a different story. Old Testament Israel has the state experience behind it. The term "post-state" would seem to be the more adequate one to characterize Israel's real position in history.[8]

The unceasing history of hatred directed against the Jews, in my conviction, is largely explained by the post-state legacy of the Jewish people. The exodus out of the world of states, documented in and transmitted by Jewish Scriptures and customs, is perceived by the state as a threat to its existence. A continuous threat runs from Pharaoh and his fear-inspired murder of Hebrew children, through Haman ("There is a certain people, dispersed among many peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom, who keep themselves apart. Their laws are different from those of every other people; they do not keep your majesty's laws. It does not befit your majesty to tolerate them." Esther 3:8, NEB), to Hitler ("Conscience is a Jewish invention"). Those in power perceive the work of the liberating God; they have a foreboding of their unavoidably approaching fall.

The gospel message: repent

The summary of the gospel confirms the same truth. "The time has come; the kingdom of God is upon you; repent and believe the gospel" (Mark 1-15, NEB). The kingdom of God is at hand to take the place of the kingdoms (the states). To repent means to trust no longer in the necessity of the world of states.

Compared to the Old Testament, the religious fog covering the New Testament is still deeper. Thereby it has become difficult to understand the New Testament as the fulfillment of the Old in the sense of a complete, worldwide, and radical rejection of the state. It has become difficult to conceive of Jesus carrying forward the line initiated by the Exodus event. But this is exactly what should be done. Jesus did not leave this line, nor did he divert it to more spiritual realms.

"Nothing is more alien to us than the state," Tertullian said at the end of the second century. Between the time of the New Testament and Tertullian's *Apology* there was not what could be called a political radicalization of the Christian church. The movement was in the opposite direction. So, if Tertullian was still speaking that way in the second century (and his writings are full of similar sayings), what can we expect from the New Testament?

Indeed, the gospel is the call—addressed first to Israel and then to the other nations—to abandon the losing party and to join the winning one, the kingdom of the liberating God who had brought Israel out of Egypt. The kingdom of God is not an elusive thing which resists translation into concrete and tangible forms in humankind. If that were the case, the kingdom of God would be for all eternity, compatible with the kingdoms of this earth. The opposite is true. The kingdom of God wants to

take shape in human life and society—the shape of a new humankind. It is, therefore, incompatible with existing states.

No other way explains the narrative of the temptation of Jesus by the devil which we find in Luke, in Matthew, and in a much shorter form in Mark. Jesus' refusal to sacrifice on the altar of violence, i.e., to bow down to the devil, does not mean that henceforth he abandons the world with all its kingdoms to the jurisdiction and control of the devil. On the contrary, the story makes unmistakably clear that any form of cooperation or symbiosis between Jesus and the prince of this world is excluded. The struggle is uncompromising. If Jesus is to be Lord, the King of kings, then Satan will be beaten out of the field. In the language of the gospel, when the evil spirits—puppets of Satan—are subjected to his seventy messengers, then Jesus sees Satan falling like lightning from heaven, i.e., the throne of the world (Luke 10:17f.)

Jesus also said, "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world" (John 18:36, RSV). The contrast between the kingdom of Jesus and the empire whose representative was the Roman proconsul Pilate is not between here and elsewhere or between material and immaterial reality. It is between fighting versus not fighting by the respective servants. The opposition is absolute. No alliance is possible between the two.

Luke's Gospel alone deals with the content of the conversation between Moses, Elijah, and Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. The Old Testament figures talk to Jesus "about the exodus, which he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31, my translation). With the word "exodus"—a word used rarely in the New Testament—Luke indicates Jesus' way as being in line and on a level with the Exodus of Israel. It is the fulfillment aimed at by the liberation out of Egypt. The presence of Moses is significant in this connection.

Jesus' action against the demons cannot be seen apart from his struggle with Satan, the prince of evil spirits as well as of this world. Demons and casting them out seem like matters which are obsolete in our modern world. My conviction, however, is that we witness daily attempts to drive out devils by Beelzebul, the prince of devils (Mark 3:22). In our modern world the highest political wisdom still is that power, terror, and violence can only be opposed by power, terror, and violence. Thinking and acting in these terms is spiritual disease (the demonolatry) which is taken in our modern world, as well as in the ancient world, for common sense and realism. It is the normal attitude.

Max Weber, the great German sociologist, thought human society was, in the last resort, dominated by demons (Weber, 1922; see also note 7). One can hardly accuse Weber of obscurantism. Quite the contrary, he was a rationalist. The difference between Weber and Jesus is that the rationalist held this to be an incurable state of things, while Jesus did something about it. He made a start in plundering the strong man's house (Mark 3:27). His own relatives thought he was mad, and Jerusalem experts declared him affected by an unclean spirit. In the meantime, Jesus stole from the domain of demons people whom he gathered into a new family. This family does not fit the patterns of this world of violence; it is the family of those who do the will of God.

The kingdom of God and Jesus' passion

The passion of Jesus—his death on the cross—confirms the fact that his life and work were essentially incompatible with the world of states—represented in his case by the Roman Empire and its vassals and puppets. The death on the cross was not accidental. It was connected to the whole life and work of Jesus. It was connected to his representation of the kingdom of God on the scene of the other kingdoms.[9]

The cross is suffering by, from, and under the state.

The new community of faith

The community of the faithful, offspring of the mission and message of Jesus, is the community of those representatives of the nations who renounce their allegiance to the tradition of violence embodied in the states and embody the alternative to thinking and acting in terms of coercion and power politics.

In his struggle against the prince of this world and his agents and in his stand and action against the tradition of violence (cf. the Sermon on the Mount), Jesus gathered the new human family which is to replace the old structure. This view of the community of faith is historically familiar to Mennonites. My concern is to emphasize the political dimension of the community of the new age and its incompatibility with the old violent world of states.

All the Gospels mention the twelve as the nucleus of the new community initiated by Jesus. Apparently he intended his disciples and the disciples of his disciples to be the continuation and renewal of Israel and its history. This meant, at any rate, that Jesus wanted his community to be as concrete, real, and present on the scene of states and nations as the old Israel was intended to be. Luke carried the work of Jesus a step further. The designation and sending of the seventy by Jesus (Luke 10) had concrete political significance. In the Bible, seventy seems to be the number of the nations. Ostensibly, Luke looked upon the community of faith as the movement uniting the nations into the new humankind.

According to Mark 10:35ff., James and John applied for the first and second offices in Jesus' administration. Interestingly, Jesus neither dissociated himself from his disciples' implicit expectation that there would be a Jesus administration nor from the idea that some of his friends would fill its high offices. But he did say that it would be difficult for them—yet possible—to qualify for those positions. In his explanation of the requirements applicants would have to meet, Jesus emphasized that his community is the absolute reverse of the world of states. Whoever wants merit in the new community will have to withdraw from the domination and coercion inherent in the states of the world.

Romans 13:1-7 cannot be left out of our discussion. This passage has been perpetually abused in the attempt to justify and enforce Christian conformity to the state. Nothing, however, is more impossible and tortuous. Even over against the state authorities, the community of faith abstains from violence, enmity, and hatred. How could the faithful conform to the violence of the state? Here is one example of the real logic of Romans: conscientious objectors do not conform to the state but, by going to jail, they submit to the authorities (Stern, 1973:ch. 3; Yoder, 1972:ch. 10).

What, briefly, is the origin and cause of the traditional misunderstanding and abuse of Romans 13? Paul wrote to people who had nothing to do with state affairs. They were the objects of government. They were not the bearers of the state's sovereignty. The Christian position in society was different from Caesar's. They were subjects in the passive sense of this word. However, within centuries after Paul wrote his letter, the community of faith—called to be the alternative to the state—changed radically its course. Henceforth, it began to read Romans 13 as a document addressed to the partner of the state instead of its alternative.

For Christians of our time an additional obstacle impedes understanding Paul's words. For the past two centuries or so, citizens of modern democratic states are no longer subjects in the passive sense but have become subjects in the active sense,

bearers of sovereignty and, essentially, in the role of Caesar or the kings of ancient times. As a result Romans 13 is read today by Christians in a position doubly opposed to that of Paul's readers.

How could Paul, who spent his entire life building a community without divisions, be the author of a theory which pushes the faithful to conform to and even identify with their respective states, thus making them each other's enemies? This would be spiritual and historical nonsense and would constitute a grave transgression of hermeneutic rules. The community of faith which wants to be in a position comparable to that of the first readers of Romans 13 will have to abstain from participation in state violence and from cooperation elections, i.e., legitimation of government and the sovereignty of the state. Participation in state violence and in elections is not the way to submit to authorities. It is the way people behave as authorities themselves. It is subjecting others to oneself. Taking part in the military and membership in political parties (potential authorities) means being active subjects of the state and subduing one's fellow humans.

The statelessness of the community of faith, its nonviolence and nonresistance, is unbelief in the possibility to bring about justice and peace violently in the way of power politics. It is not belief in the possibility to achieve peace and justice without violence. In addition, the salvation (liberation) of humanity is not a subject we can place on the agenda of a peace movement. It comes from elsewhere (Rom. 12; Matt. 6).

The decline of the states

The disappearance of the world of states, hoped for and necessary, is at hand. The coexistence of the state and the community of faith is only temporary. Herein lies the dividing line between the governmental churches tradition and the Anabaptist or Mennonite view. The disappearance of the world of states is promised and, therefore, hoped for. The necessity of this disappearance is becoming more and more evident; the ability of the state to cope with the problems of humankind is diminishing all the time.

Becoming a peace church

What, then, is the agenda for a church which wants to become again a peace church?

1. We must make a fresh start in reading the Old Testament and the New Testament, especially trying to set the New Testament free from the religious dust piled upon it through the ages.

2. We must form a clear idea of the connection between rational arguments and biblical positions. The biblical vision is not alien to the world in the sense that it should be on bad terms with common sense. Therefore it could be appropriate to reformulate the adage *credo quia absurdum* as *credo quia rationale*—a missionary concern!

3. We will have to discuss the question: What are the practical implications, the possibilities, and the impossibilities of living in the temporary dwelling of the state?

4. Our competence is restricted to the sphere of means. Peace cannot be accomplished as if it were a question of solving technically a social problem. Humankind's deliverance comes from elsewhere. We will have to think about the practical application of these insights.

5. We will have to rethink the position of the Mennonites in the peace movement. What kind of contribution can and must we make?

These considerations are of current significance for Mennonite congregations in the Netherlands. They may be relevant also for Mennonite congregations in other parts of the world.

Notes

1. IKV means literally InterKerkelijk Vredesberaad, i.e., InterChurch Peace Council. It was created by nine Dutch churches, including the Dutch Mennonite Conference. The IKV has functioned during the past seven years more as a movement than as a consultative group.

2. To the observation of Pascal one could add that the term "democratic state" is a contradiction in terms. Democracy, taken in its original meaning of "right to all" or "liberty, equality and fraternity," is incompatible with thinking in power and violence, the essence of the state.

3. Charles Isbell (1982:37-61) concludes, on the ground that the Hebrew word "serve" proves to be a key word in the narrative: "In a sense, then, the real issue throughout the narrative is not slavery versus freedom, but merely the identity of the master whom Israel must *serve*" (p. 45). One also ought to ask the question, what is the relationship between the liberation of the Hebrew slaves and Israel's later legislation in matters of slavery?

4. This somewhat awkward passage in Exodus 14:1-4 receives in this view a natural and undistorted explanation. Israel, already free, turns back and seems to provoke Pharaoh into chasing the liberated or escaped slaves, with the well-known consequence. Modern translations often obscure the fact that Exodus does not speak of the destruction of Egyptians but of Egypt. In many places they render "Egyptians" where they ought to translate "Egypt." In chapter 14 the Hebrew text has "Egypt," nowhere "Egyptians." In Exodus 1-14 the Hebrew uses the word "Egyptian" only in 2:11, 12, 14 and 19. This seems significant. The many times we read "Egyptians" in modern translations, we have to replace this, in my view, by "Egypt." It is against Egypt, not against Egyptians, that the action of the Deliverer-God is directed.

5. I am inclined to agree with the proposition of N. K. Gottwald (1979:512-34) to understand and translate the word "inhabitants" in many cases as "rulers" or "authorities."

6. I wonder if the word rendered by "foreign," used only here in the Old Testament, designates a linguistic phenomenon, as the translation tradition suggests. Could it point to the difference in social and political structure between Israel and Egypt?

7. In idols the Old Testament rejects thinking and acting in terms of power and violence, interest and influence, which culminates in the state. There is a connection between the Deuteronomic rejection of idols and the warning to the king not to make the people go back to Egypt (Deut. 17:16). The modern democratic state bears, in my eyes, a great resemblance to the ancient polytheistic state, all the more so if emphasis is laid on the formal sense of the words "democratic" and "democracy": on things like equality of opportunity and universal suffrage. In both the ancient and the modern state, the power center is the resultant of a pluralism of powers. Even in terminology and symbolism, there is much affinity.

I dare to propose the thesis: Modern (formal) democracy is the vengeance of polytheism, its comeback after the monotheistic period of Constantinianism. The dress of formal democratic rules which the Western states adopted in the nineteenth century could be seen as the mimicry to which power politics is compelled by the growing consciousness of material (as opposed to mere formal) democracy and justice; by the growing influence of Jesus, one could perhaps say (Girard, 1978).

8. According to Gottwald (1979), the anti-statism of Israel does look more like a reversion to pre-statism than like leading the way to post-statism. In certain respects the view here represented is congenial to the ideas, concepts, and endeavors

of J. Dus (1975:26-41), G. E. Mendenhall (1973), and N. K. Gottwald (1979). Whereas they are mainly interested in reconstructing ancient Israel's history, my chief interest is in the Old Testament story as such. Their historical observations are fruitful for the reading and the exegesis especially of the Exodus narrative.

9. In the Revelation 11:8 passage about the two nameless witnesses, there is an allusion to Jerusalem as the great city which is allegorically called Sodom and Egypt, and where "their Lord was crucified." This underlines the view on the death of Jesus as comparable with the Exodus, the liberation from Egypt. "Egypt" crucified the Lord. Jerusalem can be described as "Egypt," as state.

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MISSION AND HOPE

A New Heaven and a New Earth (Revelation 21)

ROELF S. KUITSE

This is the last of a five-part series, "Mission and Hope," first presented at the Overseas Missions Seminar of Mennonite Board of Missions in June 1980. Roelf S. Kuitse has been a missionary, educator, and pastor in the Netherlands, Indonesia, West Africa, and the USA. He served as director of the Mission Training Center, Elkhart, Indiana, from 1979-1982 and teaches there now.

We have dealt with the basis of the Christian hope: the resurrection of the crucified servant of the Lord ("Expectant Memory," *Mission Focus*, March 1985). We have also paid attention to the way of the Christian hope: the body of Christ in life and witness revealing something of the new order that God is creating. This new way of life and witness keeps the future open (*Mission Focus*, June 1985 and September 1985).

Now our focus will be the end of the way, the object of hope, which is the definite fulfillment of the divine plan, the reaching of God's purpose in history. The Bible speaks about that purpose in different ways. "The consummation of the work of Christ," "the glory," "the kingdom of God," "the new heaven and the new earth." "We wait for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet. 3:11-13; Rev. 21).

There has been a lot of speculation about the how, when, why, and what of this future reality. These speculations have often drawn attention away from the essential features of the kingdom of God, for the coming of which Jesus has taught us to pray. The New Testament speaks in many different images about a reality which is beyond human imagination and understanding. Revelation 21 helps us to view that new reality—the new heaven and the new earth.

Encouragement and subversion

The Revelation of John is encouragement literature. It encourages Christians exposed to persecution in the Roman Empire to stand fast, to persevere, to continue the struggle.

It is not only encouragement literature but also in a sense subversive literature. People who believe in a new heaven and earth, the new reality of the kingdom of God, can never absolutize the present order, the present state of being, the present status quo of the world. They can never be satisfied with things as they are. They will never find themselves at home or at ease in the world. That is the revolutionary, subversive aspect of the biblical message about the crucified Lord whose return is expected.

The Revelation of John does not encourage its readers to dream away from the present to the future, from earth to heaven, from pain to joy. It was written to encourage Christians in the Roman Empire to erect signs of the kingdom here and now, in the present and on this earth. These signs point to the full glory of the kingdom that has been revealed in Christ.

David Bosch, in his book *Witness to the World* (1980:246-47), says:

> *Because she [the church] heard God saying "Behold! I am making all things new" (Rev. 21:5) she can already begin something new. Nothing may remain unaffected. . . . The suggestion that things might stay as they are, is the very antithesis of the Gospel. It is nothing less than a denial of Christ's resurrection and of the inauguration of the New Age. Someone who knows that God will one day wipe away all tears, cannot with resignation accept the tears of those who suffer and are oppressed now. . . .*

We can add that when we know that God will wipe away all tears, then we cannot take part in the justification of evil that causes tears. Often we lack the power to remove evil. This lack of power should never lead us to the inner adjustment to evil and the justification of evil. When we read and believe that pain and disease will vanish, then we cannot but begin to anticipate, here and now, the victory over disease in individuals and communities. When we hear and believe (Rev. 21:1: "the sea was no more"; the sea was seen as a symbol of evil powers, a symbol of chaos) that the demonic powers will be completely conquered, then we cannot but start to unmask the works of these powers in the world.

This does not mean that our ethical endeavors will build the kingdom. The new city comes down from heaven; the new heaven and earth are the result of the creative work of God (21:2-10). The church cannot be more than a sign of the kingdom. Christians cannot do more than erect small signs of the kingdom.

This leaves no place for holy activism that expects everything from human plans and works. Neither does it allow for resignation or quietism, which dreams of the future and waits for the transformation of the world in the future, because the present is believed to be unchangeable. The prayer for the coming of the kingdom of God is directly followed by the words, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." The will of the King has to be obeyed—that means to move in the direction of that kingdom, transforming the world and thus contributing to the hope of people.

Garden and city

The story of God and the world created by God started in a garden and ends in a city. That is remarkable. To us, cities are usually places of evil. We find it difficult to agree with Ignatius, one of the church fathers, who once said, "God loves big cities." Our work in mission has been to a large extent work in the countryside. The big cities have been neglected. Yet, the image of the city is used to describe the new reality of the kingdom.

The city is a symbol of people living together in close community. Revelation 21 speaks about the city of Jerusalem, the city where God dwells. God will dwell with the people; the people will dwell with God. The covenant ("I will be your God and you will be my people"; "Immanuel . . . God with us") finds its fulfillment in an unbroken community between God and women and men.

Another image used is that of marriage. This image is often used in the Old Testament and New Testament for the covenant between God and Israel, for the relationship between Christ and his church. In Revelation 21:2 and 9 this image is used again to point to the unbroken community between God and the people. God dwells among the people; the impossible is made possible.

In the city—the new Jerusalem—there is no holy place, no temple, no church. The whole city is full of the glory of God, the presence of God. The church is not the end of God's ways or of God's mission. It is only the means through which the message of the kingdom is preached and lived out. The kingdom of God is the horizon of God's work, the end and goal of God's mission.

The nations are also mentioned. The election was for the sake of the nations. Election was for service. Again, promises will be fulfilled: the nations will come, and they will bring into the city "their treasures and their wealth" (Rev. 21:26, Jerusalem Bible), "their honor and their glory." What does that mean? Could it not mean that the nations, each in its own way, each according to its own cultural pattern, contribute to the praise of God?

Whistling in the dark?

Is not this hope in a world renewed a dream, a projection on the empty screen of the future? Is it not whistling in the dark? Many times it seems so to us when we face the powers of evil which express themselves in different ways, outside the church but also many times inside the church. It seems so to us when we see the violence in our world, when we see how racism, sexism, secularism, and materialism deform human lives, how human dignity and human rights are violated, how a demonic mind is at work finding new ways to destroy human life. It is difficult to believe that this can change.

The good powers that will overcome the evil powers do not come from humankind. Because of the work of God, in creation and exodus, in the life and resurrection of Christ, in the work of the Spirit, we do believe that light will overcome darkness, that what was hidden in the name of God ("I am," "I am the one who is present") will become full reality. If this hope, challenged by the world and strengthened by the Word of God, is a living reality for us, it does not mean that we have solutions for all the problems of church and society. It does not mean that we have blueprints at our disposal for what has to be done in order to renew the world.

It does mean, however, that we know the direction in which we have to go and the direction in which we should not go. It does mean that we can cope with disillusionments, disappointments, and defeats. It means that we get the courage to start again after defeat. It means that some way or another we give witness to the hope in us, in word and work, by taking small steps in the direction of God's kingdom.

We know of the glory of God that will be revealed at the coming of God's kingdom because of the unmasking of the gods and the evil powers that has taken place in and through the life and work of Jesus Christ. Yet, at the same time, we have to acknowledge that we lack understanding and a clear idea. What we see is only a dim reflection in a mirror and not yet face

to face. However, we know enough to continue our way in faith and hope, praising God with the words of one of the Psalms:

> Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel,
> who alone performs these marvels!
> Blessed for ever be his glorious name,
> may the whole world be filled with his glory!
> (72:19, Jerusalem Bible).

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In review

Kisare: A Mennonite of Kiseru. By Joseph C. Shenk. Salunga, Pa.: Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, 1984, 184 pp., $6.00 (pb)

Reviewed by Nzash Lumeya

Kisare's is the latest moving and fascinating story of an outstanding East African church leader. It is an autobiography as told to Joseph C. Shenk and is a backbone on African culture, theology, and missiology.

"The traditional missionary story tells of those who went to distant lands carrying the gospel. Kisare is the flip side of that story: he tells about receiving the gospel."

Bishop Kisare, with a grasp of his own culture, shares insights on the traditional African way of life, including the Luo ethnic rites of transformation and purification. For example, "to break the curse which (a) man brought upon himself . . . a sheep is killed . . . the sheep's blood along with juices and certain herbs are mixed together . . . after he has confessed he is symbolically cleansed" (p. 80).

The easy-to-read paperback offers basic Christocentric teaching on salvation and articulates an evangelical story of spiritual deliverance parallel with the African rite of purification. It is a substantial summary of mission history in Tanzania, revealing how missionaries—both Westerners and Africans—are used in the proclaiming of the gospel of peace. Communities of new people in Christ are built with the discipled Africans. "My greatest joy has always been in seeing men and women come into a right relationship with God . . . This is why I never tire . . . preaching and teaching the Word" (p. 111).

This unique publication is brief and enlightening; it offers "perceptive insight into the nature of the gospel." Surely its fast-moving message is for all people interested in God's action in the two-thirds world as well as enlightenment on delicate issues such as church leadership, ethnicity, finances, church-mission relationships, education, and the role of women.

Even those who disagree with details will find Kisare stimulating, for this autobiography is a valuable contribution to African Anabaptist studies.

Nzash Lumeya is a doctoral student at the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. He was Director of Evangelical Bible School in Bangui, Central Africa, and a secondary school teacher in Kikwit, Zaire.

Hope and Suffering: Sermons and Speeches. By Desmond M. Tutu. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984, 189 pp., $6.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Donald R. Jacobs

I first met Bishop Desmond Tutu in 1979 at the South African Christian Leadership Assembly. He was a wisp of a man, quick and gentle, a person who speaks with his eyes. On his diminutive size 36 shoulders God placed an almost unbearable burden: to speak for justice in a land in which injustice is institutionalized, set in the hardest of concrete. As he spoke before that multiracial crowd of 3,000 people in Pretoria, a hush fell. His clear, high voice carried a passionate appeal to love one another in Christ Jesus. His simplicity gave dazzling clarity to his message.

When this book appeared, Tutu had already received six honorary doctorates, none from South African institutions. Since then, of course, additional honors have been granted, culminating in the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize.

The bishop's work delights the opponents of the apartheid system but sends a paralyzing fear into the hearts of the system's caretakers. While outsiders applaud the bishop, the nation's institutions dread the sight of him on campus. The government is suspicious that he is being used by outsiders. His writings put a lie to that idea. This man of God thinks for himself, and he speaks the mind of millions in South Africa.

One can meet this remarkable man in this book. It contains nineteen Tutu speeches and sermons selected by one of his colleagues who lives and works in Soweto, Mothobi Mutloatse. It covers the years 1967 to 1982. The book was first published in Johannesburg in 1983. The audiences addressed range from a women's group to the prime minister himself. The last piece, Tutu's 1982 defense before the Eloff Commission of Inquiry which was investigating the South African Council of Churches of which the bishop was then General Secretary, will likely become a classic.

Taken together, these essays reveal a man who is basically a pastor of God's flock. His love for his people requires that he promote their welfare, and thus his political activism. He is obviously not a politician but a pastoral theologian. One seeks in vain to discover his political concepts in these writings.

The bishop goes straight to the exodus as his starting place to develop his theology, and from that liberation event he works backward to creation and forward to the work of Christ and the eschaton. To that extent he develops a liberation theology.

But Tutu's anthropology is incarnational, a true blend of spiritual and social realities. At the congress referred to above, he declared himself as a fundamentalist and preached a sermon in which he showed that social concern arises directly from the crucified Lord's act. He refused to divide the world into spiritual and political realms. What concerns God, he contends, should concern God's followers, and certainly God is concerned about politics.

Bishop Tutu is no great theologian either; he plows no new ground in this book. Rather he is a spokesman in a disturbed society, reminding that society that if it does not soon find ways to listen to one another and to respect the dignity of all, it will explode in a scene too gruesome to imagine.

The bishop is known for his nonviolent stance. While this should please the government, it gives them the jitters instead because they have little really to pin on him. Inevitably the South African government must silence this man some way or other, or at least reduce his influence. Lovers of peace will be troubled because they know that what South Africa really needs is not one less Tutu but a thousand more.

Even though the bishop is a great hoper, he nevertheless sees the handwriting on the wall. He is right when he says, "Those of us who will still speak 'peace' and 'reconciliation' belong to a rapidly diminishing minority" (p. 117). And so, hostile society continues to crucify the children of peace.

These sentences, written in 1980, wrap it all up:

> *There is still a chance, but if we let it slip, then it will be gone for ever. Neither the most sophisticated arsenal nor the best army or police force will give White South Africa true security, for that will come and come automatically when all of us, Black and White, know we count as of equal worth in the land of our birth, which we love with a passionate love. Please God, we pray you, let them hear us, let them hear us, before it is too late* (p. 101).

Read this book, and you will feel the heartthrob of one of God's special contemporary voices.

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Counseling Cross-Culturally. By David J. Hesselgrave. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984, 436 pp., $14.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Al Dueck

Hesselgrave's objective in this pioneering book is to encourage us to "think before exporting too much of the purely Western ingredients of counseling and practice" and to be more "sensitive to other ways of diagnosing and dealing with human problems" (p. 10). This readable book introduces the helper to the rise of the cross-cultural counseling movement.

Having had personal experience as a missionary in Japan, the author is sensitive to the over-professionalization of counseling in the West and its incongruity in other cultures. Sensitivity, he argues, will be required in understanding that there will be different goals for therapy in different cultural settings. Techniques of Western counseling may be inappropriate in third world countries.

After a brief review of Western approaches to counseling, Hesselgrave presents and expands a model of Christian counseling. He then gives a helpful review of non-Western ways of viewing mental illness and counseling (particularly Japanese). In the next section, Hesselgrave develops a theory of Christian cross-cultural counseling. Specifically, this involves three steps: analyzing problems in the light of the host culture and the Bible, determining one's role as a change agent, and developing a culture-sensitive counseling approach. A final section of the book explores larger social dimensions of change across cultures.

Hesselgrave provides ample illustrations from cross-cultural counseling to make his points, and the book is useful as a survey of the field. The attempt at a Christian approach to counseling is developed primarily by reference to Western theorists.

However, the book provides little help in understanding how the healing resources of another culture are used in the counseling process of Christians. The author might explore further how psychotherapy in Western culture reflects that culture. One is still left wondering whether North American psychological perspectives will be uncritically exported with the blessing of evangelicals. To be sure, those psychologies that directly violate Scripture will not be exported, but much more work needs to be done to understand how American psychologies function in the American setting before we can seriously consider using them in another cultural setting.

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Momentous Decisions in Missions Today. By Donald A. McGavran. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984, 230 pp., $11.95 (pb).

Reviewed by Henry J. Schmidt

Donald McGavran, veteran missionary statesman, father of the church growth movement, dean emeritus and senior professor of church growth and South Asian studies at the School of World Mission, Fuller Seminary, has done the church and the cause of mission a great service in his latest writing. Although *Momentous Decisions in Missions Today* echoes many of McGavran's earlier themes in his twenty plus other publications (it is God's will that his church grows, that the lost sheep be found; the homogeneous unit principle, discipling *ta éthne;* finding receptive people), it does so with a contemporary and fresh style. This is clearly McGavran at his best, drawing on his missionary experience in India, his comprehensive grasp of missionary principles and movements, his sociological understanding of cultural groups, and his creative strategizing abilities.

The book focuses major missiological issues under four main sections: theological, sociological, mission/church, and strategic. In Section 1 McGavran laments the fact that mission has come to mean "everything God wants done in the world" rather than "discipling the peoples or reconciling men to God-in-Christ." He views the Conciliar Churches (World Council of Churches) as "having switched so thoroughly to mission as working for peace, building a new social order, outlawing thermonuclear war, granting women equal rights, and other good causes that they find it difficult to return to eliminating the greatest poverty of all—that of not knowing and following Jesus Christ our Lord."

This shift from evangelism as the heart of Christian mission to actions that rectify the injustices of the world and usher in a Christian social order represents a systematic downplaying of the great commission. McGavran challenges both the assumptions of Lesslie Newbigin (the great commission is nowhere cited in the New Testament as a basis of missions) and of Paul Tillich (all humankind which is not yet Christian is "the latent Church," and all have been reconciled to God by the death of Christ, but they do not yet know it) by devoting two chapters to the authenticity of the great commission.

The theological section includes such issues as the need for revised creedal statements about missions, the myth of spontaneous evangelism as normative for all Christians, the need for mission to the receptive and to the resistant, and the ecumenical concern of oneness, particularly in relation to world evangelization.

Section 2 delineates the sociological issues of racism/caste systems, people movements, cultural and racial pluralism, and the internationalization of missions. McGavran makes a strong case for the homogenous unit principle in establishing churches, not as an end in itself but because people tend to be reached best by "their kind of people" and because only as more people are converted can the theological foundations and local manifestations of racism be transcended. Several chapter titles illustrate McGavran's vision of unreached pockets of people and his passion for the establishment of churches among all peoples ("Asians in Britain," "Are American Jews a hidden people?").

Section 3, which includes three brief chapters, probes the area of relationships between sending mission societies and the national church. The book makes a strong case for mission agencies and nationals joining hands in establishing international teams of church planters. While McGavran emphasizes the absolute imperative of indigenization, he is critical of mission societies that leave all the initiative for evangelism and church planting with the national church because it often results in a maintenance ministry and gross neglect of three billion unreached people.

In the final section, *Momentous Decisions in Mission Today* calls for entrepreneurs in modern mission. Entrepreneurs are people who constantly "think abstractly about the fundamental purpose of missions and constantly develop strategies and implement tactics necessary to achieve that purpose." McGavran addresses in a practical and careful manner the crucial topics of missions to peer nations, the role of literature and radio in church growth, the new urban faces of the church, the urgency of increasing the missionary task force around the world, and the need for new mission strategies today.

McGavran leaves few stones unturned in addressing the crucial mission issues facing both the One-Third and the Two-Thirds world churches. Mission executives, pastors, missionaries, and people concerned about global outreach will find this volume most helpful,

not only for an analysis of the issues but also for practical directives.

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World Mission and World Survival. By E. Luther Copeland. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1985, 186 pp., $6.95 (pb)

Reviewed by Roy Sider

E. Luther Copeland deals with the real issues in the contemporary world and the witness of the Christian church in it. He blends evangelism and social responsibility in a call for a holistic ministry. Evenhandedness is advocated in forming attitudes toward current revolutions and the American Revolution. At the same time the validity of evangelism is strongly endorsed. "The Christian mission is joyous: it is sharing of 'Good News of great joy' " (Luke 2:10). And it is urgent: the good news is a matter of life and death.

The author brings a degree of subjectivity from two periods of missionary service in Japan—1948-56 and 1975-80—as pastor, theology professor, and university chancellor. There is a blend of objectivity, since he served in the USA two decades between his overseas terms. This hiatus provided opportunity for reflection and evaluation of his earlier missionary service.

Copeland's upbringing in the United Methodist Church and later membership and missionary service in the Southern Baptist Convention broadens his perspective on missions. His evaluation of their respective policies in overseas missions and their divergent responses to the call for a moratorium on sending missionaries accounts for the contrast in the size and vigor of their current mission programs.

The history of the modern mission movement is traced from its days of identification with colonialism up to the present. The graphic growth of the church accounts for Christians being identified among all 223 countries of the world. That is not as good as it appears. The percentage of Christians (using the broadest possible definition) among the earth's population declined from 34 percent in 1900 to 33 percent in 1980.

World Mission and World Survival provides direction toward the church's full-orbed mandate for mission in today's world.

Roy Sider, Stevensville, Ontario, is Director of Overseas Ministries for the Brethren in Christ Board of World Missions.

Mission Focus Index

Volume 13 (1985)

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Guest Editorial

Great attention is being paid to the question of Gospel and culture, to the question of the contextualization of the Gospel in different cultures. Recent missionary literature is full of the subject.... But why is it that we have a plethora of missionary studies on the contextualization of the Gospel in all the cultures of the world from China to Peru, but nothing comparable directed to the culture which we call "the modern world"?—Bishop Lesslie Newbigin (1985:25-26).

Can there be an effective missionary encounter with the powerful, persuasive, and confident culture of the West? In precisely that culture what shape does the gospel take—the gospel which radically challenges the powers of unfaith and death?

Anyone seeking in the European setting an answer to these questions cannot afford to ignore the European peace movement. Perhaps as much as any recent development in Europe, the peace movement—in large measure Christian in origin and membership—has named and confronted some of the central idols of the established Western order. At times the results have been missionary: renewed churches or parishes, creation of new cells of God's people, proclamation in the public world of Christ's lordship, conversion from false faith to faith. In the process, for many involved, discussion on the nature and mission of the church has been renewed. A keynote speaker at an ecumenical gathering of German Christian peace activists asserted that "our immediate concern is not to try still harder but to build an authentic church," a church of peace (Duchrow, 1984).

How might the church become a peace church in this context? The articles in this issue of *Mission Focus* speak out of and/or to the debate on this question. Larry Miller assumes that a rediscovery of the biblical perspectives on church and world are foundational but wonders how the comfortable Western Christian can understand and believe the Bible.

Wilfried Warneck examines the difficulties and possibilities for the mainstream churches of Europe to become peace churches. "Most important," writes Warneck, "will be the encouragement coming from the united witness and example of the historic peace churches. If the peace churches do not unite worldwide in an unambiguous witness for peace, everyone will conclude that it is impossible for the church to live for an extended period as a peace church. If the peace churches do not find again their original motivation and drive, there is little hope for the reformation of the Constantinian churches."

Kees van Duin calls Christians involved in the peace movements—and first of all Mennonites—to move beyond a "neo-Constantinian" practice of church and state. He suggests that the first step toward becoming (again) peace churches is a "fresh start in reading the Old Testament and the New Testament, especially trying to set the New Testament free from the religious dust piled upon it through the ages." Van Duin himself makes just such a fresh start.—Larry Miller

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